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"MR. PUNCH'S"
PRIZE NOVELS

"MR. PUNCH'S" PRIZE NOVELS

NEW SERIES

BY

R. C. LEHMAN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM "PUNCH"

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TO

F. C. Burnand

MR. PUNCH'S PRIZE NOVELS.

NEW SERIES.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.

THIS age has been called an Age of Progress, an Age of Reform, an Age of Intellect, an Age of Shams; everything in fact except an Age of Prizes. And yet, it is perhaps as an Age of Prizes that it is destined to be chiefly remembered. The humble but frantic solver of Acrostics has had his turn, the correct expounder of the law of Hard Cases has by this time established a complete code of etiquette; the doll-dresser, the epigram-maker, the teller of witty stories, the calculator who can discover by an instinct the number of letters in a given page of print, all have displayed their ingenuity, and have been magnificently rewarded by

prizes varying in value from the mere publication of their names, up to a policy of life insurance, or a completely furnished mansion in Peckham Rye. In fact, it has been calculated by competent actuaries that taking a generation at about thirty-three years, and making every reasonable allowance for errors of postage, stoppage *in transitu*, fraudulent bankruptcies and unauthorized conversions, 120 per cent. of all persons alive in Great Britain and Ireland in any given day of twenty-four hours, must have received a prize of some sort.

Novelists, however, had not until last year received a prize of any sort, at least as novelists. The reproach has been removed. A prize of £1000 was offered for the best novel by the editor of a newspaper. The most distinguished writers were, so it was declared, entered for the Competition, but only the name of the prize-winner was to be revealed, only the prize-winning novel was to be published. Such at least was the assurance given to all the eminent authors by the Editor in question. But *Mr. Punch* laughs at other people's assurances,

and by means of powers conferred upon him by himself for that purpose, he was able to obtain access to all the novels sent in, and to publish a selection of Prize Novels, together with the names of their authors, and a few notes of his own, wherever the text seemed to require them.

In acting thus *Mr. Punch* felt, in the true spirit of the newest and the Reviewest of Reviews, that he was conferring a favor on the authors concerned by allowing them the publicity of his columns. In certain cases pruning and condensation were necessary. The operation has been performed as kindly as circumstances permitted. It is hardly necessary to add that *Mr. Punch* will *give his own prize in his own way, and at his own time*, to the author he may deem the best.

The Interview.

See p. 19

BOB SILLIMERE.*

BY MRS. HUMPHRY JOHN WARD PREACHER,

Author of "Master Sisterson."

CHAPTER I.

It was evening—evening in Oxford. There are evenings in other places occasionally. Cambridge sometimes puts forward weak imitations. But, on the whole, there are no evenings which have so much of the true, inward, mystic spirit as Oxford evenings. A solemn hush broods over the gray

* On the paper in which the MS. of this novel was wrapped, the following note was written in a bold feminine hand:—"This is a highly religious story. George Eliot was unable to write properly about religion. The novel is certain to be well reviewed. It is calculated to adorn the study-table of a bishop. The £1,000 prize must be handed over at once to the Institute

quadrangles, and this, too, in spite of the happy laughter of the undergraduates playing touch last on the grass-plots, and leaping, like a merry army of marsh-dwellers, each over the back of the other, on their way to the deeply impressive services of their respective college chapels. Inside, the organs were pealing majestically, in response to the deft fingers of many highly respectable musicians, and all the proud traditions, the legendary struggles, the well-loved examinations, the affectionate memories of generations of proctorial officers, the innocent rustications, the warning appeals of authoritative Deans—all these seemed gathered together into one last loud trumpet-call, as a tall, impressionable youth, carrying with him a spasm of feeling, a Celtic temperament, a moved, flashing look, and a surplice many sizes too large for him, dashed with a kind of quivering, breathless sigh into the chapel of St. Boniface's just as the porter was about to close the door. This was Robert, or, as his friends

which is to be founded to encourage new religions in the alleys of St. Pancras.—H. J. W. P."

lovingly called him, Bob Sillimere. His mother had been an Irish lady, full of the best Irish humor; after a short trial, she was however, found to be a superfluous character, and as she began to develop differences with Catherine, she caught an acute inflammation of the lungs, and died after a few days, in the eleventh chapter.

Bob sat still awhile, his agitation soothed by the comforting sense of the oaken seat beneath him. At school he had been called by his school-fellows "the Knitting-needle," a remarkable example of the well-known fondness of boys for sharp, short nicknames; but this did not trouble him now. He and his eagerness, his boundless curiosity, and his lovable mistakes, were now part and parcel of the new life of Oxford—new to him but old as the ages, that, with their rhythmic recurrent flow, like the pulse of——[*Two pages of fancy writing are here omitted.* ED.] Brigham and Black were in chapel, too. They were Dons, older than Bob, but his intimate friends. They had but little belief, but Black often preached, and Brigham held un-

decided views on life and matrimony, having been brought up in the cramped atmosphere of a middle-class parlor. At Oxford the two took pupils, and helped to shape Bob's life. Once Brigham had pretended, as an act of pure benevolence, to be a Pro-Proctor, but as he had a sardonic scorn, and a face that could become a marble mask, the Vice-Chancellor called upon him to resign his position, and he never afterwards repeated the experiment.

CHAPTER II.

One evening Bob was wandering dreamily on the banks of the Upper River. He sat down, and thought deeply. Opposite to him was a wide green expanse dotted with white patches of geese. There and then, by the gliding river, with a mass of reeds and a few poplars to fill in the landscape, he determined to become a clergyman. How strange that he should never have thought of this before; how sudden it was; how wonderful! But the die was cast; *alea jacta est*, as he had read yesterday

in an early edition of St. Augustine; and, when Bob rose, there was a new brightness in his eye, and a fresh springiness in his steps. And at that moment the deep bell of St. Mary's——[*Three pages omitted.* Ed.]

CHAPTER III.

And thus Bob was ordained, and having married Catherine, he accepted the family living of Wendover, though not before he had taken occasion to point out to Black that family livings were corrupt and indefensible institutions. Still, the thing had to be done; and bitterly as Bob pined for the bracing air of the East End of London, he acknowledged, with one of his quick, bright flashes, that, unless he went to Wendover, he could never meet Squire Murewell, whose powerful arguments were to drive him from positions he had never qualified himself, except by an irrational enthusiasm, to defend. Of Catherine a word must be said. Cold, with the delicate but austere firmness of a West-

morland daisy, gifted with fatally sharp lines about the chin and mouth, and habitually wearing loose gray gowns, with bodices to match, she was admirably calculated, with her narrow, meat-tea proclivities, to embitter the amiable Sillimere's existence, and to produce, in conjunction with him, that storm and stress, that perpetual clashing of two estimates without which no modern religious novel could be written, and which not even her pale virginal grace of look and form could subdue. That is a long sentence, but, ah! how short is a merely mortal sentence, with its tyrannous full stop, against the immeasurable background of the December stars, by whose light Bob was now walking, with heightened color, along the vast avenue that led to Wendover Hall, the residence of the ogre Squire.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Squire was at home. On the door-step Bob was greeted by Mrs. Farcey, the Squire's

sister. She looked at him in her bird-like way. At other times she was elf-like, and played tricks with a lace handkerchief.

"You know," she whispered to Bob, "we're all mad here. I'm mad, and he," she continued, bobbing diminutively towards the Squire's study-door, "he's mad too—as mad as a hatter."

Before Bob had time to answer this strange remark, the study-door flew open, and Squire Murewell stepped forth. He rapped out an oath or two, which Bob noticed with faint politeness, and ordered his visitor to enter. The Squire was rough—very rough; but he had studied hard in Germany.

"So you're the young fool," he observed, "who intends to tackle me. Ha, ha, that's a good joke. I'll have you round my little finger in two twos. Here," he went on gruffly, "take this book of mine in your right hand. Throw your eyes up to the ceiling." Robert, wishing to conciliate him, did as he desired. The eyes stuck there, and looked down with a quick lovable look on the two men below.

"Now," said the Squire, "you can't see. Pronounce the word 'testimony' twice, slowly. Think of a number, multiply by four, subtract the Thirty-

"Bob."

nine Articles, add a Sunday School and a packet of buns. Result, you're a freethinker." And with that he bowed Bob out of the room.

CHAPTER V.

A TERRIBLE storm was raging in the rector's breast as he strode, regardless of the cold, along the verdant lanes of Wendover. "Fool that I was!" he muttered, pressing both hands convulsively to his sides. "Why did I not pay more attention to arithmetic at school? I could have crushed him, but I was ignorant. Was that result right?" He reflected a while mournfully, but he could bring it out in no other way. "I must go through with it to the bitter end," he concluded, "and Catherine must be told." But the thought of Catherine knitting quietly at home, while she read Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, with a tender smile on her thin lips, unmanned him. He sobbed bitterly. The front-door of the Rectory was open. He walked in.——The rest is soon told. He resigned the Rectory,

and made a brand-new religion. Catherine frowned, but it was useless. Thereupon she gave him cold bacon for lunch during a whole fortnight, and the brave young soul which had endured so much withered under this blight. And thus, acknowledging the novelist's artistic necessity, Robert died.

[THE END.]

" The wax spluttered and melted."

See p. 33

A BUCCANEER'S BLOOD-BATH.*

By L. S. DEEVENSON,

AUTHOR OF

"*Toldon Dryland*," "*The White Heton*," "*Wentnap*," "*Amiss with a Candletray*," "*An Outlandish Trip*," "*The Old Persian Baronets*," *Etc.*

CHAPTER I.

I AM a man stricken in years, and well-nigh spent with labor, yet it behooves that, for the

* For some weeks before this novel actually arrived, we received by every post an immense consignment of paragraphs, notices, and newspaper cuttings, all referring to it in glowing terms. "This," observed the *Bi-weekly Boomer*, "is, perhaps, the most brilliant effort of the brilliant and versatile author's genius. Humor and pathos are inextricably blended in it. He sweeps with confident finger over the whole gamut of human emotions, and moves us equally to terror and to pity. Of the style it is sufficient to say that it is MR. DEEVENSON'S." The MS. of the novel itself came in a wrapper bearing the Samoan post-mark.—ED. *Punch.*

public good, I should take pen in hand, and set down the truth of those matters wherein I played a part. And, indeed, it may befall that, when the tale is put forth in print, the public may find it to their liking, and buy it with no sparing hand, so that, at the last, the payment shall be worthy of the laborer.

I have never been gifted with what pedants miscall courage. The extreme rashness of the temper which drives fools to their destruction hath no place in my disposition. A shrinking meekness under provocation, and a commendable absence of body whenever blows fell thick, seemed always to me to be the better part. And for this I have boldly endured many taunts. Yet it so chanced that in my life I fell in with many to whom the cutting of throats was but a moment's diversion. Nay, more, in most of their astounding ventures I shared with them; I made one upon their reckless forays; I was forced, sorely against my will, to accompany them upon their stormy voyages, and to endure

with them their dangers; and there does not live one man, since all of them are dead, and I alone survive, so well able as myself to narrate these matters faithfully within the compass of a single five-shilling volume.

CHAPTER II.

On a December evening of the year 17—, ten men sat together in the parlor of "The Haunted Man." Without, upon the desolate moorland, a windless stricture of frost had bound the air as though in boards, but within, the tongues were loosened, and the talk flowed merrily, and the clink of steaming tumblers filled the room. Dr. Dead-eye sat with the rest at the long deal table, puffing mightily at the brown old church-warden, whom the heat and the comfort of his evening meal had so far conquered, that he resented the doctor's treatment of him only by an occasional splutter. For myself, I sat where the warmth of the cheerful fire could reach my chilled toes, close by the side of the good doctor. I was a mere lad, and even now, as I search in my memory for those long-forgotten scenes, I am prone to marvel at my own heedless-

ness in thus affronting these lawless men. But, indeed, I knew them not to be lawless, or I doubt not but that my prudence had counselled me to withdraw ere the events befell which I am now about to narrate.

As I remember, the Doctor and Captain Jawkins were seated opposite to one another, and, as their wont was, they were in high debate upon a question of navigation, on which the Doctor held and expressed an emphatic opinion.

"Never tell me," he said, with flaming aspect, "that the common term, 'Port your helm,' implies aught but what a man, not otherwise foolish, would gather from the word. Port means port, and starboard is starboard, and all the d—d sea-captains in the world cannot move me from that." With that the Doctor beat his fist upon the table until the glasses rattled again and glared into the Captain's weather-beaten face.*

* *Editor to Author:* "How did the glasses manage to glare? It seems an odd proceeding for a glass. Answer paid."

Author to Editor: "Don't be a fool. I meant the Doctor—not the glasses."

"Hear the man," said the Captain—"hear him. A man would think he had spent his days and nights upon the sea, instead of mixing pills and powders all his life in a snuffy village dispensary."

The quarrel seemed like to be fierce, when a sudden sound struck upon our ears, and stopped all tongues. I cannot call it a song. Rather, it was like the moon-struck wailing of some unhappy dog, low, and unearthly; and yet not that, either, for there were words to it. This much we all heard distinctly—

"Fifteen two and a pair make four,
Two for his heels, and that makes six."

We listened, awestruck, with blanched faces, scarce daring to look at one another. For myself, I am bold to confess that I crept under the sheltering table and hid my head in my hands. Again the mournful notes were moaned forth—

"Fifteen two and a pair make four,
Two for his heels, and——"

But ere it was ended, Captain Jawkins had sprung forward, and rushed into the further corner of the parlor. "I know that voice," he cried aloud; "I know it amid a thousand!" And even as he spoke, a strange light dispelled the shadows, and by its rays we could see the crouching form of Bill Bluenose, with the red seam across his face where the devil had long since done his work.

CHAPTER III.

I HAD forgot to say that, as he ran, the Captain had drawn his sword. In the confusion which followed on the discovery of Bluenose, I could not rightly tell how each thing fell out; indeed, from where I lay, with the men crowding together in front of me, to see at all was no easy matter. But this I saw clearly. The Captain stood in the corner, his blade raised to strike. Bluenose never stirred, but his breath came and went, and his eyelids blinked strangely, like the flutter of a sere leaf against the wall. There came a roar of voices, and, in the tumult, the Captain's sword flashed quickly, and fell. Then, with a broken cry like a sheep's bleat, the great seamed face fell separate from the body, and a fountain of blood rose into the air from the severed neck, and splashed heavily upon the sanded floor of the parlor.

"Man, man!" cried the Doctor, angrily, "what have ye done? Ye've kilt Bluenose, and with him goes our chance of the treasure. But, maybe, it's not yet too late."

So saying, he plucked the head from the floor and clapped it again upon its shoulders. Then, drawing a long stick of sealing-wax from his pocket, he held it well before the Captain's ruddy face. The wax spluttered and melted. The Doctor applied it to the cut with deft fingers, and with a strange condescension of manner in one so proud. My heart beat like a bird's, both quick and little; and on a sudden Bluenose raised his dripping hands, and in a quavering kind of voice piped out—

"Fifteen two and a pair make four."

But we had heard too much, and the next moment we were speeding with terror at our backs across the desert moorland.

CHAPTER IV.

You are to remember that when the events I have narrated befell I was but a lad, and had a lad's horror of that which smacked of the supernatural. As we ran, I must have fallen in a swoon, for I remember nothing more until I found myself walking with trembling feet through the policies of the ancient mansion of Dearodear. By my side strode a young nobleman, whom I straightway recognized as the Master. His gallant bearing and handsome face served but to conceal the black heart that beat within his breast. He gazed at me with a curious look in his eyes.

"Squaretoes, Squaretoes," said he—it was thus he had named me, and by that I knew that we were in Scotland, and that my name was become Mackellar—"I have a mind to end your prying and your lectures here where we stand."

"End it," said I, with a boldness which seemed

strange to me even as I spoke; "end it, and where will you be? A penniless beggar and an outcast."

"The old fool speaks truly," he continued, kicking me twice violently in the back, but otherwise ignoring my presence; "and if I end him, who shall tell the story? Nay, Squaretoes, let us make a compact. I will play the villain, and brawl, and cheat, and murder; you shall take notes of my actions, and, after I have died dramatically in a North American forest, you shall set up a stone to my memory, and publish the story. Why say you? Your hand upon it."

Such was the fascination of the man that even then I could not withstand him. Moreover, the measure of his misdeeds was not yet full. My caution prevailed, and I gave him my hand.

"Done," said he; "and a very good bargain for you, Squaretoes!"

Let the public, then, judge between me and the Master, since of his house not one remains, and I alone may write the tale.

(*To be continued.*—Author.) [THE END.—EDITOR OF *Punch*.]

MIGNON'S MESS-ROOM.*

By TOM RUM SUMMER,

AUTHOR OF

"Mignon's Ma," "Mignon's Hub," "Footles' Father," Tootle's Tootsie," "Ugly Tom," "Your Rich Richard," "A Baby in Barracks," "Stuck," "Horp-Love," "Went for that Pleeceman," Etc., Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

"Three blind mice—
See how they run."—*Old Song.*

THE Officers of the Purple Dragoons were gathered together in their ante-room. It was a way they had. They were all there. Grand

* "This," writes the eminent author, "is a *real*, *true* story of the life of soldiers and children. Soldiers are *grand*, *noble* fellows. They are so *manly*, and all smoke a great deal of tobacco. My drawl is the only genuine one. I could do a lot more of the same sort, but I charge extra for pathos. I'm a man.—T. R. S."

fellows, too, most of them—tall, broad-shouldered, and silky-haired, and as good as gold. That gets tiresome after a time, but everything can be set right with one downright rascally villain—a villain, mind you, that poor, weak women know nothing about. Gavor was that kind of man. Of course that was why he was to break his neck, and get smashed up generally But I am anticipating, and a man should never anticipate. Emily, for instance, never did. Emily—Captain Emily, of the Purple Dragoons—was the biggest fool in the Service. Everybody told him so; and Emily, who had a trustful, loving nature, always believed what he was told.

"I nev-ah twry," he used to say—it was a difficult word to pronounce, but Emily always stuck to it as only a soldier can, and got it out somehow—"I nev-ah twry to wremember things the wwrong way wround."

A roar of laughter greeted this sally. They all knew he meant "anticipate," but they all loved their Emily far too well to set him right.

"'Pon my soul," he continued, "it's quite twrue. You fellows may wroawr wiv laughtewr if you like, but it's twrue, and you know it's twrue."

There was another explosion of what Emily would have called "mewrwriment," at this, for it was well-known to be one of the gallant dragoon's most humorous efforts. A somewhat protracted silence followed. Footles, however, took it in both hands, and broke it with no greater emotion than he would have shown if he had been called upon to charge a whole squadron of Leicestershire Bullfinches, or to command a Lord Mayor's escort on the 9th of November. Dear old Footles! He wasn't clever, no Purple Dragoon could be, but he wasn't the biggest fool in the Service, like Emily, and all the rest of them. Still he loved another's.

In fact, whenever a Purple Dragoon fell in love, the object of his affections immediately pretended to love some one else. Hard lines, but soldiers were born to suffer. It is so easy, so true, so usual to say, "there's another day to-morrow," but that never helped even a Purple Dragoon to worry

through to-day any the quicker. Poor, brave, noble, drawling, manly, pipe-smoking fellows! On this particular occasion Footles uttered only one word. It was short, and began with the fourth letter of the alphabet. But he may be pardoned, for some of the glowing embers from his magnificent briar-wood pipe had dropped on to his regulation overalls. The result was painful—to Footles. All the others laughed as well as they could, with clays, meerschaums, briars, and asbestos pipes in their mouths. And through the thick cloud of scented smoke the mess-waiter came into the room, bearing in his hand a large registered letter, and coughing violently.

CHAPTER II.

"The mouse ran up the clock."—*Nursery Rhyme.*

THE waiter advanced slowly to Footles, and handed him the letter. Footles took it meditatively, and turned it over in both hands. The post-marks were illegible, and the envelope much crumpled. "Never mind," thought Footles, to himself, "it will dry straight—it will dry straight." He always thought this twice, because it was one of his favorite phrases. At last he decided to open it. As he broke the seal a little cry was heard, and suddenly, before even Emily had had time to say "I nev-ah!" a charming and beautifully dressed girl, of about fifteen summers, sprang lightly from the packet on to the mess-room floor, and kissed her pretty little hand to the astonished Dragoons.

"You're Footles," she said, skipping up to the thunder-stricken owner of the name. "I know

you very well. I'm going to be your daughter, and you're going to marry my mother. Oh, it's all right," she continued, as she observed Footles press

"You're Footles," she said.

his right hand convulsively to the precise spot on his gorgeous mess-waistcoat under which he imagined his heart to be situated, "it's all right. Pa's

going to be comfortably killed, and put out of the way, and then you'll marry darling Mamma. She'll be a thousand times more beautiful at thirty-three than she was at twenty-two, and *ever* so much more lovely at fifty-five than at thirty-three. So it's a good bargain, isn't it, Em?" This to Emily, who appeared confused. She trotted up to him, and laid her soft, blooming cheek against his blooming hard one.

"Never mind, Em," she lisped, "everything is bound to come out right. I've settled it all"—this with a triumphant look on her baby-face—"with the author; such a splendid writer, none of your twaddling woman-scribblers, but a real man, and a great friend of mine. I'm to marry you, Em. You don't know it, because you once loved Naomi, who 'mawrwried the Wrevewrend Solomon'"—at this point most of the Purple Dragoons were rude enough to yawn openly. She paid no attention to them—"and now you love Olive, but she loves Parkack, and he doesn't love her, so she has got to marry Parkoss, whom she doesn't love.

Their initials are the same, and everybody knows their caligraphy is exactly alike," she went on wearily, "so that's how the mistake arose. It's a bit far-fetched, but," and her arch smile as she said this would have melted a harder heart than Captain Emily's, "we mustn't be too particular in a soldier's tale, you know."

As she concluded her remarks the door opened, and Colonel Purser entered the room.

CHAPTER III.

"Pat a cake, pat a cake, baker's man."—*Old Ballad.*

COLONEL PURSER was a stout, plethoric man. He was five feet seven inches high, forty five inches round the chest, fifty inches round the waist, and every inch of him was a soldier. He was, therefore, a host in himself. He gasped, and turned red, but, like a real soldier, at once grasped the situation. The Colonel was powerful, and the situation, in spite of all my pains, was not a strong one. The struggle was short.

"Pardon me," said the Colonel, when he had recovered his wind, "is your name Mignon?"

"Yes," she replied, as the tears brimmed over in her lovely eyes, "it is. I am a simple soldier's child, but, oh, I can run so beautifully—through ever so many volumes, and lots of editions. In

fact," she added confidentially, "I don't see why I should stop at all, do you? Emily *must* marry me. He can't marry Olive, because Dame Nature put in *her* eyes with a dirty finger. Ugh! I've got blue eyes."

"But," retorted the Colonel quickly, "shall you never quarrel?"

"Oh, yes," anwered Mignon, "there will come a rift in the hitherto perfect lute of our friendship (the rift's name will be Darkey), but we shall manage to bridge it over—at least Tom Rum Summer says so." Here Emily broke in. He could stand it no longer. "Dash it, you know, this is wewry extwraowrdinawry, wewry extwraowrdinawry indeed," he observed. "You'wre a most wremawrkable young woman, you know."

A shout of laughter followed this remark, and in the fog of tobacco-smoke Colonel Purser could be dimly seen draining a magnum of champagne.

CHAPTER IV.

"Hey diddle, diddle."—*Songs and Romances.*

EVERYTHING fell out exactly as Mignon prophesied. But if you think that you've come to the end of Mignon, I can only say you're very much astray, or as Emily, with his smooth silky voice, and his smoother silkier manners, would have said, "You'wre wewry much astwray." See my next dozen stories.

[THE END.] (*Pro tem.*)

"The Three Musketeers."

BURRA MURRA BOKO.*

By KIPPIERD HERRING,

AUTHOR OF

'Soldiers' Tea," *"Over the Darodees,"* *"Handsome Heads on the Valets,"* *More Black than White,"* *"Experimental Dittos,"* *Etc., Etc.*

POLLA dan anta cat anta. What will you have, Sahib? My heart is made fat, and my eyes run with the water of joy. *Kni vestog rind, Scis sorstog rind,* the Sahib is as a brother to the needy, and the afflicted at the sound of his voice become

* The MS. of this story arrived from India by pneumatic despatch, a few puffs having been apparently sufficient. In a letter which was inclosed with it the Author modestly apologizes for its innumerable merits. "But," he adds, "I have several hundred of the same sort in stock, and can supply them at a moment's notice. Kindly send £1,000 in Bank of England notes, by registered letter, to K. Herring. No farther address will be required."

as a warming-pan in a *fôr postah.* Ahoo! Ahoo! I have lied unto the Sahib. *Mi ais an dlims*, I am a servant of sin. *Burra Murra Boko! Burra Murra Boko!*

There came a sound in the night as of an elephant-herd trumpeting in anger, and my liver was dissolved, and the heart within me became as a *Patoph Buttah* under the noon-day sun. I made haste, for there was fear in the air, Sahib, and the *Pleez Mahn* that walketh by night was upon me. But, oh, Sahib, the cunning of the serpent was with me, and as he passed I tripped him up, and the raging river received him. Twice he rose, and the gleam of his eyes spake in vain for help. And at last there came a bubble where the man had been, and he was seen no more. *Burra Murra Boko! Burra Murra Boko!*

That night I spake unto her as she stood in the moonlight. "Oh, sister of an oil-jar, and daughter of pig-troughs, what is it thou hast done?" And she, laughing, spake naught in reply, but gave me the *Tcheke Slahp* of her tribe, and her fingers fell

upon my face, and my teeth rattled within my mouth. But I, for my blood was made hot within me, sped swiftly from her, making no halt, and the noise of fifty thousand devils was in my ears, and the rage of the *Smâk duns* burnt fierce within the breast of me, and my tongue was as a fresh fig that grows upon a southern wall. *Auggrh!* pass me the peg, for my mouth is dry. *Burra Murra Boko! Burra Murra Boko!*

Then came the Yunkum Sahib, and the Bunkum Sahib, and they spake awhile together. But I, like unto a *Brerra-bit*, lay low, and my breath came softly, and they knew not that I watched them as they spake. And they joked much together, and told each to the other how that the wives of their friends were to them as mice in the sight of the crouching *Tabbikat*, and that the honor of a man was as sand, that is blown afar by the storm-wind of the desert, which maketh blind the faithful, and stoppeth their mouths. Such are all of them, Sahib, since I that speak unto you know them for what they are, and thus I set forth the tale that all men

may read, and understand. *Burra Murra Boko! Burra Murra Boko!*

"'Twas the most ondacint bedivilmint ever I set eyes on, Sorr. There was I blandandhering widout——"

"Pardon me," I said, "this is rather puzzling. A moment back you were a Mahajun of Pali, in Marwur, or a Delhi Pathan, or a Wali Dad, or something of that sort, and now you seem to have turned into an Irishman. Can you tell me how it is done?"

"Whist, ye oncivilized, backslidering pagin!" said my friend, Private O'Rammis, for it was indeed he. "Hould on there till I've tould ye. Fwhat was I sayin'? Eyah, eyah, them was the bhoys for the dhrink. When the sun kem out wid a blink in his oi, an' the belly-band av his new shoot tied round him, there was Porters and Athus lyin' mixed up wid the brandy-kegs, and the houl of the rigimint tearin' round like all the divils from hell bruk loose.

"Thin I knew there'd be thrubble, for ye must

know, Sorr, there was a little orf'cer bhoy cryin' as tho' his little heart was breakin', an' the Colonel's wife's sister, wid her minowderin' voice——"

"Look here, O'Rammis," I said, "I don't like to stop you; but isn't it just a trifle rash—I mean," I added hastily, for I saw him fingering his bayonet, "is it quite as wise as it might be to use up all your materials at once? Besides, I seem to have met that little orf'cer bhoy and the Colonel's wife's sister before. I merely mention it as a friend."

"You let 'im go, Sir," put in Porters, with his cockney accent. "Lor, Sir, Terence knows bloomin' well wot 'e's torkin' about, an' wen 'e's got a story to tell you know there ain't one o' us wot'll get a bloomin' word in; or leastways, Hi carn't."

"Sitha," added Jock Athus. "I never gotten but one story told mysen, and he joomped down my throaat for that. Let un taalk, Sir, let un taalk."

"Very well," I said, producing one of the half-

dozen bottles of champagne that I always carried in my coat-tail pockets whenever I went up to the Barracks to visit my friend O'Rammis, "very well. Fire away, Terence, and let us have your story."

"I'm an ould fool," continued O'Rammis in a convinced tone. "But ye know, Jock, how 'twas. I misremember fwhat I said to her, but she never stirred, and only luked at me wid her melancolious ois, and wid that my arm was round her waist, for bedad, it was pretty she was under the moon in the ould barrick square. 'Hould on there,' she says, 'ye boiled thief of Deuteronomy. D'ye think I've kem here to be philandhering afther you. I'd make a better man than you out av empty kyartridges and putty.' Wid that she turned on her heel, and was for marching away. But I was at her soide again before she'd got her left fut on the beat. 'That's quare,' thinks I to myself; 'but, Terence, me bhoy, 'tis you knows the thricks av the women. Shoulder arrums,' I thinks, and let fly wid the back sight.' Wid that I just squeezed her hand wid the most dellikit av all squeezings, and,

sez I, 'Mary, me darlint,' I sez, 'ye're not vexed wid Terence, I know;' but you never can tell the way av a woman, for before the words was over the tongue av me, the bhoys kem raging an' ramshackling——"

"Really, O Rammis," I ventured to observe, for I noticed that he and his two friends had pulled all the other five bottles out of my pocket, and had finished them, "I'm a little disappointed with you to-day. I came out here for a little quiet blood and thunder before going to bed, and you are mixing up your stories like the regimental laundress's soapsuds. It's not right of you. Now, honestly, is it?"

But the Three Musketeers had vanished. Perhaps they may re-appear, bound in blue-gray on the railway bookstalls, with many quotations from reviews. Perhaps not. And the worst of it is, that the Colonel will never understand them, and the gentlemen who write articles will never understand them. There is only one man who knows all about them, and even he is sometimes what my friend

O'Rammis calls "a blandandhering, philandhering, misundherstandhering civilian man."

Which his name is Kippierd Herring.

And that is perfectly true.

"You will, as usual, take the fat?"

JOANNA OF THE CROSS WAYS.*

By GEORGE VERIMYTH,

Author of "Richard's Several Editions," "The Aphorist," "Shampoo's Shaving-Pot." Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

In the earlier portion of the lives of all of us there is a time, heaven-given without doubt, for all things, as we know, draw their origin thence, if only in our blundering, ill-conditioned way we trace them back far enough with the finger of fate pointing to us as in mockery of all striving of ours on this rough bosom of our mother earth, a time there comes when the senses rebel, first faintly,

* With this story came a long, explanatory letter. The story however, is itself so clear and easy to understand (as is all the work of this master), that the accompanying commentary is unnecessary.

and then with ever-increasing vehemence, panting, beating, buffeting and breasting the torrent of necessity, against the parental decree that would drench our inmost being in the remedial powder of a Gregorian doctor, famous, I doubt not, in his day, and much bepraised by them that walked delicately in the light of pure reason and the healthful flow of an untainted soul, but now cast out and abhorred of childhood soaring on uplifted wing through the vast blue of the modern pharmacopœia. Yet to them is there not comfort too in the symbolic outpourings of a primæval wisdom which, embodied for all time in imperishable verse, are chanted in the haunts of the very young like the soft lappings of the incoming tide on a beach where rounded pebble disputes with shining sand the mastery of the foreshore?

So, too, while the infant chariot with its slow motion of treble wheels advances obedient to the hand of the wimpled maid who from the rear directs its ambiguous progress, the dozing occupant may not always understand, but, hearing, cannot

fail to be moved to tears by the simple tale of Joanna crossed in all her depth and scope of free vigorous life by him that should have stood her friend. For the man had wedded her. Of that there can be no doubt, since the chronicles have handed down the date of it. Wedded her with the fatal "yes" that binds a trusting soul in the world's chains. A man, too. A reckless, mutton-munching beer-swilling animal! And yet a man. A dear, brave, human heart, as it should have been; capable, it may be, of unselfishness and devotion; but, alas! how sadly twisted to the devil's purposes on earth, an image of perpetual chatter, like the putty-faced street-pictures of morning soapsuds. His names stand in full in the verse. John, shortened familiarly, but not without a hint of contempt, to Jack, stares at you in all the bravery of a Christian name. And Spratt follows with a breath of musty antiquity. Spratt that is indeed a Spratt, sunk in the oil of a slothful imagination and bearing no impress of the sirname that should raise its owner to cloudy peaks of despotic magnificence.

But of the lady's names no hint is given. We may conjecture Spratt to have been hers too, poor young soul that should have been dancing instead of fastened to a table in front of an eternal platter. And of all names to precede it the fittest surely is Joanna. For what is that but the glorification with many feminine thrills of the unromantic chawbacon John masticating at home in semi-privacy the husks of contentment, the lean scrapings of the divine dish which is offered once in every life to all. So Joanna she shall be and is, and as Joanna shall her story be told.

CHAPTER II.

MANY are the tales concerning Joanna's flashing wit. There appeared many years back, in a modest shape that excited small interest amongst the reviewing herd, a booklet whereof the title furnished little if any indication to the contents. *The Spinster's Reticule*, for so the name ran, came forth with no blare of journalistic trumpets challenging approval from the towers of critical sagacity. It appeared and lived. But between its cardboard covers the bruised heart of Joanna beats before the world. She shines most in these aphorisms. Her private talk, too, has its own brilliancy, spun, as it was here and there, out of a museful mind at the cooking of the dinner or of the family accounts. She said of love that "it is the sputter of grease in a frying-pan; where it falls the fire burns with a higher flame to consume it." * Of man, that "he

* I guarantee all these remarks to be intensely humorous and brilliant. If you can't see it, so much the worse for you. They are *screamers*.—G. V.

may navigate Mormon Bay, but he cannot sail to Khiva Point." The meaning is too obvious it may be, but the thought is well imaged.

She is delightful when she touches on life. "Two," she says, "may sit at a feast, but the feast is not thereby doubled." And, again, "Passion may lift us to Himalaya heights, but the hams are smoked in a chimney." And this of the soul, "He who fashions a waterproof prevents not the clouds from dripping moisture." Of stockings she observes that, "The knitting-needles are long, but the turn of the heel is a teaser." Here there is a fanciful irony of which matrons and maids may take note.

Such, then, was our Joanna—Joanna Meresia Spratt, to give her that full name by which posterity is to know her—an ardent, bubbling, bacon-loving girl-nature, with hands reaching from earth to the stars, that blinked egregiously at the sight of her innocent beauty, and hid themselves in winding clouds for very love of her.

CHAPTER III.

SIR JOHN SPRATT had fashions that were peculiarly his own. Vain it were to inquire how, from the long-perished Spratts that went before him, he drew that form of human mind which was his. Laws that are hidden from our prying eyes ordain that a man shall be the visible exemplar of vanished ages, offering here and there a hook of remembrance, on which a philosopher may hang a theory for the world's admiring gaze. Far back in the misty past, of which the fabulists bear record, there have swum Spratts within this human ocean, and of these the ultimate and proudest was he with whose life-story we are concerned. It was his habit to carry with him on all journeys a bulky note-book, the store in which he laid by for occasions of use the thoughts that thronged upon him,

now feverishly, as with the exultant leap of a rough-coated canine companion, released from the thraldom of chain and kennel, and eager to seek the Serpentine haunts of water-nymphs, and of sticks that fall with a splash, and are brought back time and again whilst the shaken spray bedews the onlookers; now with the staid and solemn progression that is beloved of the equine drawers of four-wheeled chariots, protesting with many growls against a load of occupants.

He had met Joanna. They had conversed. "An empty table, is it not?" said she. "Nowhere!" said he, and they proceeded. His "Nowhere!" had a penetrating significance — the more significant for the sense that it left vague.

And so the marriage was arranged, the word that was to make one of those who had hitherto been two had been spoken, and the celebrating gifts came pouring in upon the pair.

Sir John walked home with triumph swelling high in his heart. Overhead the storm-clouds

gathered ominously. First with a patter, then with a drenching flood, the prisoned rain burst its bars, and dashed clamoring down to the free earth. He paused, umbrella-less, under a glimmering lamp-post. The hurrying steeds of a carriage, passing at great speed, dashed the gathered slush of the street over his dark blue Melton overcoat. The imprecations of the coachman and his jeers mingled strangely with the elemental roar. Sir John heeded them not. He stood moveless for a space, then slowly drawing forth his note-book, and sharpening his pencil, he wrote the following phrase:—"Laid *Brother to Banjo*, one, two, three, 5 to 4."

CHAPTER IV.

A YEAR had gone by, and with the spring that whispered softly in the blossoming hedgerows, and the melancholy cry of the female fowl calling to her downy brood, Joanna had learnt new lessons of a beneficent life, and had crystallized them in aphorisms, shaken like dew from the morning leaf of her teeming fancy.

They sat at table together. Binns, the butler, who himself dabbled in aphorism, and had sucked wisdom from the privy perusal of Sir John's note-book, had laid before them a dish on which reposed a small but well-boiled leg of one that had trod the Southdowns but a week before in all the pride of lusty life. There was a silence for a moment.

"You will, as usual, take the fat?" queried Sir John.

"Lean for me to-day," retorted Joanna, with one of her bright flashes.

"Nay, nay," said her husband, "that were against tradition, which assigns to you the fat."

Joanna pouted. Her mind rebelled against dictation. Besides, were not her aphorisms superior to those of her husband? The cold face of Sir John grew eloquent in protest. She paused, and then with one wave of her stately arm swept mutton, platter, knife, fork, and caper sauce into the lap of Sir John, whence the astonished Binns, gasping in pain, with much labor, rescued them. Joanna had disappeared in a flame of mocking laughter, and was heard above calling on her maid for salts. But Sir John ere yet the sauce had been fairly scraped from him, unclasped his note-book, and with trembling fingers wrote therein, "Poole's master-pieces are ever at the mercy of an angry woman."

CHAPTER V.

BUT the world is hard, and there was little mercy shown for Joanna's freak. Her husband had slain her. That was all. She with her flashes, her gayety, her laughter, was consigned to dust. But in Sir John's note-book it was written that, "The hob-nailed boot is but a bungling weapon. The drawing-room poker is better."

"We were all on the pig-sty."

THRUMS ON THE AULD STRING.*

By J. MUIR KIRRIE,

AUTHOR OF

"A Door in Convulsions," "Bald Tight Fiddlers," When a Man Sees Double," "My Gentleman Meerschaum," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

We were all sitting on the pig-sty at T'nowhead's Farm. A pig-sty is not, perhaps, a strictly eligible seat, but there were special reasons, of which you

* With this story came a glossary of Scotch expressions. We have referred to it as we went along, and found everything quite intelligible. As, however, we have no room to publish the glossary, we can only appeal to the indulgence of our readers. The story itself was written in a very clear, legible hand, and was enclosed in a wrapper labelled, "Arcadia Mixture. Strength and Aroma combined. Sold in Six-shilling cases. Special terms for Southrons. Liberal allowance for returned empties."

shall hear something later, for sitting on this particular pig-sty.

The old sow was within, extended at full length. Occasionally she grunted approval of what was said, but, beyond that, she seemed to show but a faint interest in the proceedings. She had been a witness of similar gatherings for some years, and, to tell the truth, they had begun to bore her, but, on the whole, I am not prepared to deny that her appreciation was an intelligent one. Behind us was the brae. Ah, that brae! Do you remember how the child you once were sat in the brae, spinning the peerie, and hunkering at I-dree I-dree I droppit-it? Do you remember that? Do you even know what I mean? Life is like that. When we are children the bread is thick, and the butter is thin; as we grow to be lads and lassies, the bread dwindles, and the butter increases; but the old men and women who totter about the commonty, how shall they munch when their teeth are gone? That's the question. I'm a Dominie. What!—no answer? Go to the bottom of the class, all of you.

CHAPTER II.

As I said, we were all on the pig-sty. Of the *habitués* I scarcely need to speak to you, since you must know their names, even if you fail to pronounce them. But there was a stranger amongst us, a stranger who, it was said, had come from London. Yesterday when I went ben the house I found him sitting with Jess; to-day, he too, was sitting with us on the pig-sty. There were tales told about him, that he wrote for papers in London, and stuffed his vases and his pillows with money, but Tammas Haggart only shook his head at what he called "such auld fowks' yeppins," and evidently didn't believe a single word. Now Tammas, you must know, was our humorist. It was not without difficulty that Tammas had attained to this position, and he was resolved to keep it. Pos-

sibly he scented in the stranger a rival humorist whom he would have to crush. At any rate, his greeting was not marked with the usual genial cordiality characteristic of Scotch weavers, and many were the anxious looks exchanged amongst us, as we watched the preparations for the impending conflict.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER Tammas had finished boring half-a-dozen holes in the old sow with his sarcastic eye, he looked up, and addressed Hendry McQumpha.

"Hendry," he said, "ye ken I'm a humorist, div ye no?"

Hendry scratched the old sow meditatively, before he answered.

"Ou ay," he said, at length. "I'm no saying 'at ye're no a humorist. I ken fine ye're a sarcesticist, but there's other humorists in the world, am thinkin."

This was scarcely what Tammas had expected. Hendry was usually one of his most devoted admirers. There was an awkward silence which made me feel uncomfortable. I am only a poor Dominie, but some of my happiest hours had been passed on the pig-sty. Were these merry meet-

ings to come to an end? Pete took up the talking.

"Hendry, my man," he observed, as he helped himself out of Tammas's snuff-mull, "ye're ower kyow-owy. Ye ken humor's a thing 'at spouts out o' its ain accord, an' there's no nae spouter in Thrums 'at can match wi' Tammas."

He looked defiantly at Hendry, who was engaged in searching for coppers in his north-east-by-east-trouser pocket. T'nowhead said nothing, and Hookey was similarly occupied. At last, the stranger spoke.

"Gentlemen," he began, "may I say a word? I may lay claim to some experience in the matter. I travel in humor, and generally manage to do a large business."

He looked round interrogatively. Tammas eyed him with one of his keen glances. Then he worked his mouth round and round to clear the course for a sarcasm.

"So you're the puir crittur," said the stone-breaker, "'at's meanin' to be a humorist."

This was the challenge. We all knew what it meant, and fixed our eyes on the stranger.

"Certainly," was his answer; "that is exactly my meaning. I trust I make myself plain. I'm willing to meet any man at catch-weights. Now here," he continued, "are some of my samples. This story about a house-boat, for instance, has been much appreciated. Or this screamer about my wife's tobacco-pipe and the smoking mixture. Observe," he went on, holding the sample near to his mouth, "I can expand it to any extent. Ah! it has burst. No matter, these accidents sometimes happen to the best regulated humorists. Now, just look at these," he produced half-a-dozen packets rapidly from his bundle. "Here we have a packet of sarcasm—equal to dynamite. I left it on the steps of the Savile Club, but it missed fire somehow. Then here are some particularly neat things in checks. I use them myself to paper my bedroom. It's simpler and easier than cashing them, and besides," adjusting his mouth to his sleeve, and laughing, "it's quite killing when you come to

think of it in that way. Lastly, there is this banking-account sample, thoroughly suitable for journalists and children. You see how it's done. I open it, you draw on it. Oh, you don't want a drawing-master, any fellow can do it, and the point is it never varies. Now," he concluded, aggressively, "what have you got to set against that, my friend?"

We all looked at Tammas. Hendry kicked the pail towards him, and he put his foot on it. Thus we knew that Hendry had returned to his ancient allegiance, and that the stranger would be crushed. Then Tammas began—

"Man, man, there's no nae doubt at ye lauch at havers, an' there's mony 'at lauchs 'at your clipper-clapper, but they're no Thrums fowk, and they canna' lauch richt. But we maun juist settle this matter. When we're ta'en up wi' the makkin' o' humor, we're a' dependent on other fowk to tak' note o' the humor. There's no nane o' us 'at's lauched at anything you've telt us. But they'll lauch at me. Noo then," he roared out, "'A pie sat on a pear-tree.'"

We all knew this song of Tammas's. A shout of laughter went up from the whole gathering. The stranger fell backwards into the sty a senseless mass.

"Man, man," said Hookey to Tammas, as we walked home; "what a crittur ye are! What pit that in your heed?"

"It juist took a grip o' me," replied Tammas, without moving a muscle; "it flashed upon me 'at he'd no stand that auld song. That's where the humor o' it comes in."

"Ou, ay," added Hendry, "Thrums is the place for rale humor."

On the whole, I agree with him.

" Then a strange thing happened."

THE BOOK OF KOOKARIE.*

By READER FAGHARD,

AUTHOR OF

"Queen Bathsheba's Ewers," "Yawn," "Guess," Me," "My Ma's at Penge," "Smallun Halfboy," "General Porridge, D. T.," "Me a Kiss," "The Hemisphere's Ire," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

My name is Smallun Halfboy, a curious name for an old fellow like me, who have been battered and knocked about all over the world from York-

* In a long communication which accompanied the MS. of this novel, the Author gives a description of his literary method. We have only room for a few extracts. "I have been accused of plagiarism. I reply that the accusation is ridiculous. Nature is the great plagiarist, the sucker of the brains of authors. There is no situation, however romantic or grotesque, which Nature does not sooner or later appropriate. Therefore

shire to South Africa. I'm not much of a hand at writing, but, bless your heart, I know the *Bab Ballads* by heart, and I can tell you it's no end of a joke quoting them everywhere, especially when you quote out of an entirely different book. I am not a brave man, but nobody ever was a surer shot with an Express longbow, and no one ever killed more Africans, men and elephants, than I have in my time. But I do love blood. I love it in regular rivers all over the place, with gashes and slashes and lopped heads and arms and legs rolling about everywhere. Black blood is the best variety; I mean the blood of black men, because nobody really cares twopence about them, and you can massacre several thousands of them in

the more natural an author is, the more liable is he to envious accusations of plagiarism. . . . Humor may often be detected in an absence of leg-coverings. A naval officer is an essentially humorous object. . . . . As to literary style, it can be varied at pleasure, but the romantic Egyptian and the plain South African are perhaps best. In future my motto will be, '*Ars Langa Rider brevis*,' and a very good motto too. I like writing in couples. Personally I could never have bothered myself to learn up all these quaint myths and literary fairy tales, but Lang likes it."

half-a-dozen lines and offend no single soul. And, after all, I am not certain that black men have any souls, so that makes things safe all round, as someone says in the *Bab Ballads*.

CHAPTER II.

I WAS staying with my old friend Sir Henry Hurtus last winter at his ancestral home in Yorkshire. We had been shooting all day with indifferent results, and were returning home fagged and weary with our rifles over our shoulders. I ought to have mentioned that Coodent—of course, you remember Captain Coodent, R. N.—was of the party. Ever since he had found his legs so much admired by an appreciative public, he had worn a kilt without stockings, in order to show them. This, however, was not done from vanity, I think, but rather from a high sense of duty, for he felt that those who happened to be born with personal advantages ought not to be deterred by any sense of false modesty from gratifying the reading public by their display. Lord, how we had laughed to see him struggling through the clinging brambles

in Sir Henry's coverts with his eye-glass in his eye and his Express at the trail.

At every step his unfortunate legs had been more and more torn, until there was literally not a scrap of sound skin upon them anywhere. Even the beaters, a stolid lot, had roared when old Velveteens the second keeper had brought up to poor Coodent a lump of flesh from his right leg, which he had found sticking on a thorn-bush in the centre of the high covert. Suddenly Sir Henry stopped and shaded his eyes with his hands anxiously. We all imitated him, though for my part, not being a sportsman, I had no notion what was up. "What's the time of day, Sir Henry?" I ventured to whisper. Sir Henry never looked at me, but took out his massive gold Winchester repeater and consulted it in a low voice. "Four thirty," I heard him say, "they are about due." Suddenly there was a whirring noise in the distance. "Duck, duck!" shouted Sir Henry, now thoroughly aroused. I immediately did so, ducked right down in fact, for I did not know what might

be coming, and I am a very timid man. At that moment I heard a joint report from Sir Henry and Coodent. It gave on the whole a very favorable view of the situation, and by its light I saw six fine mallard, four teal and three widgeon come hurtling down, as dead as so many doornails, and much heavier, on the top of my prostrate body.

When I recovered Sir Henry was bending over me and pouring brandy down my throat. Coodent was sitting on the ground binding up his legs. "My dear old friend," said Sir Henry, in his kindest tone, "this Yorkshire is too dangerous. My mind is made up. This very night we all start for Mariannakookaland. There at least our lives will be safe."

CHAPTER III.

We were in Mariannakookaland. We had been there a month, travelling on, ever on, over the parching wastes, under the scorching African sun which all but burnt us in our *treks*. Our *Veldt* slippers were worn out, and our pace was consequently reduced to the merest *Kraal*. At rare intervals during our adventurous march, we had seen Stars and heard of Echoes, but now not a single *Kopje* was left, and we were trudging along mournfully with our blistered *tongas* protruding from our mouths.

Suddenly Sir Henry spoke—"Smallun, my old friend," he said, "do you see anything in the distance?"

I looked intently in the direction indicated, but could see nothing but the horizon. "Look again," said Sir Henry. I swept the distance with my

glance. It was a sandy, arid distance, and, naturally enough, a small cloud of dust appeared. Then a strange thing happened. The cloud grew and grew. It came rolling towards us with an unearthly noise. Then it seemed to be cleft in two, as by lightning, and from its centre came marching towards us a mighty army of Amazonian warriors, in battle-array, chanting the war-song of the Mariannakookas. I must confess that my first instinct was to fly, my second to run, my third, and best, to remain rooted to the spot. When the army came within ten yards of us, it stopped, as if by magic, and a stout Amazon, of forbidding aspect, who seemed to be the Commander-in-Chief, advanced to the front. On her head she wore an immense native jelibag, tricked out with feathers; her breast was encased in a huge silver *tureene*. Her waist was encircled with a broad girdle, in which were stuck all manner of arms. In her right hand she carried a deadly-looking *kaster*, while in her left she brandished a massive *rolinpin*, a frightful weapon, which produces internal wounds of the

most awful kind. Her regiments were similarly armed, save that, in their case, the breast-covering was made of inferior metal, and they wore no feathers in their head-dress. The Commander held up her hand. Instantly the war-song ceased. Then the Commander addressed us, and her voice sounded like the song of them that address the *boochaboys* in the morning. And this was the *torque* she hurled at us,—

CHAPTER IV.

"OH, wanderers from a far country, I am She-who-will-never-Obey, the Queen of the Mariannakookas. I rule above, and in nether regions, where there is Eternal Fire. Behold my Word goes forth, and the Ovens are made hot, and the *Kee-chen-boi-lars* are filled with Water. Over me no Mistress holds sway. All whom I meet I keep in subjection, save only the *Weeklibuks*, them I keep not down, for they delight me. And the land over which I reign is made glad with fat and much stored up *Dripn*. Who are ye, and what seek ye here? Speak ere it be too late!" And as she ceased the whole army broke forth into a chorus, "She-who-will-never-Obey has spoken! The Word is gone forth! Speak, speak!" I confess I was alarmed, and my fears were not diminished when two of the *Skulrimehds* (a sort of native camp-follower) came

up to Coodent and me, and actually began to make love to us in the most forward manner. But Sir Henry maintained his calm demeanor. "She-who-will-never-Obey," he said "we are peaceful traders. We bring no Commission——" how his sentence would have ended will never be known. Certain it is that what he said roused the Amazons to a frenzy of passion. They yelled and danced round us. "He who brings no Commission must die!" they shouted; and in a moment we found ourselves bound tightly hand-and-foot, and marching as prisoners of war in the centre of the Mariannakooka-land army.

CHAPTER V.

It is unnecessary to go through the details of our marvellous escape from the lowest dungeon of the royal palace of Survan Tsaul, where for months we were immured on a constant diet of suet pudding. Of course we did escape, but only after killing ten thousand Mariannakookas, and then swimming for a mile in their blood. Coodent brought with him a very pretty *Skulrimehd* who had grown attached to him, but she drooped and pined away after he lost his false teeth in crossing a river, and tried to replace them with orange-peel, a trick he had learnt at school. Sir Henry's fight with She-who-will-never-Obey is still remembered. He will carry the marks of her nails on his cheeks to his grave. I myself am tired of wandering. "*Home Sweet Home*," as the *Bab Ballads* have it, is the place for me.

THE DE COGNAC.*

By WATER DECANT,

AUTHOR OF

"Chaplin off his feet," "All Sorts of Editions for Men," "The Nuns in Dilemma," "The Cream he tried," "Blue-the-money Naughty-Boy," "The Silver Guter Snipe," "All for a Farden Fare," "The Roley Hose," "Caramel of Stickinesse," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

GEORGE GINSLING was alone in his college-rooms at Cambridge. His friends had just left him. They were quite the tip-top set in Christ's

* Of this story the Author writes to us as follows:—"I can honestly recommend it, as calculated to lower the exaggerated cheerfulness which is apt to prevail at Christmas time. I consider it, therefore, to be eminently suited for a Christmas Annual. Families are advised to read it in detachments of four or five at a time. Married men who owe their wives' mothers a grudge should lock them into a bare room, with a

College, and the ashes of the cigarettes they had been smoking lay about the rich Axminster carpet. They had been talking about many things, as is the wont of young men, and one of them had particularly bothered George by asking him why he had refused a seat in the University Trial Eights after rowing No. 5 in his College boat. George had no answer ready, and had replied angrily. Now, he thought of many answers. This made him nervous. He paced up and down the deserted room, sipping his seventh tumbler of brandy as he walked. It was his invariable custom to drink seven tumblers of neat brandy every night to steady himself, and his College career had, in consequence, been quite unexceptionable up to the present moment. He used playfully to remind his Dean of Porson's drunken epigram, and the good man always accepted this as an excuse for any false quantities in George's Greek Iambics. But to-night, as I

guttering candle and this story. Death will be certain, and not painless. I've got one or two rods in pickle for the publishers. You wait and see.—W. D."

have said, George was nervous with a strange nervousness, and he, therefore, went to bed, having previously blown out his candle and placed his Waterbury watch under his pillow, on the top of which sat a Devil wearing a thick jersey worked with large green spots on a yellow ground.

CHAPTER II.

Now this Devil was a Water-Devil of the most pronounced type. His head-quarters were on the

The Water-Devil.

Thames at Barking, where there is a sewage outfall, and he had lately established a branch-office on the Cam, where he did a considerable business.

Occasionally, he would run down to Cambridge himself, to consult with his manager, and on these occasions he would indulge his playful humor by going out at night and sitting on the pillows of Undergraduates.

This was one of his nights out, and he had chosen George Ginsling's pillow as his seat.

* * * * *

George woke up with a start. What was this feeling in his throat? Had he swallowed his blanket, or his cocoa-nut matting? No, they were still in their respective places. He tore out his tongue and his tonsils, and examined them. They were on fire. This puzzled him. He replaced them. As he did so a shower of red-hot coppers fell from his mouth on to his feet. The agony was awful. He howled, and danced about the room. Then he dashed at the whiskey, but the bottle ducked as he approached, and he failed to tackle it. Poor George, you see, was a rowing-man, not a football-player. Then he knew what he wanted. In his keeping-room were six *carafes*, full of Cambridge

water, and a dozen bottles of Hunyádi Janos. He rushed in, and hurled himself upon the bottles with all his weight. The crash was dreadful. The foreign bottles, being poor, frail things, broke at once. He lapped up the liquid like a thirsty dog. The *carafes* survived. He crammed them, with their awful contents, one after another, down his throat. Then he returned to his bedroom, seized his jug, and emptied it at one gulp. His bath was full. He lifted it in one hand, and drained it as dry as a University sermon. The thirst compelled him—drove him—made him—urged him—lashed him—forced him—shoved him—goaded him—to drink, drink, drink water, water, water! At last he was appeased. He had cried bitterly, and drunk up all his tears. He fell back on his bed, and slept for twenty-four hours, and the devil went out and gave his gyp, Starling, a complete set of instructions for use in case of flood.

CHAPTER III.

STARLING was a pale, greasy man. He was a devil of a gyp. He went into George's bedroom and shook his master by the shoulder. George woke up.

"Bring me the College pump," he said. "I must have it. No, stay," he continued, as Starling prepared to execute his orders, "a hair of the dog—bring it, quick, quick!"

Starling gave him three. He always carried them about with him in case of accidents. George devoured them eagerly, recklessly. Then with a deep sigh of relief he went stark staring mad, and bit Starling in the fleshy part of the thigh, after which he fell fast asleep again. On awaking, he took his name off the College books, gave Starling a check for £5,000, broke off his engagement, but forgot to post the letter, and consulted a doctor.

"What you want," said the doctor, "is to be shut up for a year in the tap-room of a public-house. No water, only spirits. That must cure you."

So George ordered Starling to hire a public-house in a populous district. When this was done, he went and lived there. But you scarcely need to be told that Starling had not carried out his orders. How could he be expected to do that? Only fifty-six pages of my book had been written, and even publishers—the most abandoned people on the face of the earth—know that that amount won't make a Christmas Annual. So Starling hired a Temperance Hotel. As I have said, he was a devil of a gyp.

CHAPTER IV.

THE fact was this. One of George's great-great uncles had held a commision in the Blue Ribbon Army. George remembered this too late. The offer of a seat in the University Trial Eights must have suggested the blue ribbon which the University Crew wear on their straw hats. Thus the diabolical forces of heredity were roused to fever-heat, and the great-great uncle, with his blue ribbon, whose photograph hung in George's home over the parlor mantelpiece, became a living force in George's brain.

George Ginsling went and lived in a suburban neighborhood. It was useless. He married a sweet girl with various spiteful relations. In vain. He changed his name to Pumpdry, and conducted a local newspaper. Profitless striving. Starling

was always at hand, always ready with the patent filter, and as punctual in his appearances as the washing-bill or the East wind. I repeat, he was a devil of a gyp.

CHAPTER V.

THEY found George Gingsling feet uppermost in six inches of water in the Daffodil Road reservoir. It was a large reservoir, and had been quite full before George began upon it. This was his record drink, and it killed him. His last words were, "If I had stuck to whiskey, this would never have happened."

[THE END.]

The Characters Personally-Conducted by the Author to Reykjavik.

THE FONDMAN.*

By CALLED ABEL,

Author of "The Teamster."

THE BOOK OF STIFFUN ORRORS.

CHAPTER I.

STIFFUN ORRORS was a gigantic fair-haired man, whose muscles were like the great gnarled round heads of a beech tree. When a man

*The eminent Author writes to us as follows :—"How's this for a Saga? Do you know what a Saga is? Nor do I, but this is one in spite of what anybody may say. History be blowed! Who cares about history? Mix up your dates and your incidents, and fill up with any amount of simple human passions. Then you'll get a Saga? After that you can write a Proem and an Epilogue. They must have absolutely nothing to do with the story, but you can put in some Northern legends, and a tale about Mahomet (by the way, I've written a

possesses that particular shape of muscle he is sure to be a hard nut to crack. And so poor Patricksen found him, merely getting his own wretched back broken for his trouble. Gorgon Gorgonsen was Governor of Iceland, and lived at Reykjavik, the capital, which was not only little and hungry, but was also a creeping settlement with a face turned to America. It was a poor lame place, with its wooden feet in the sea. Altogether a strange capital. In the month of Althing, Gorgon took his daughter to Thingummy-vellir, where there were wrestling matches. It came to the turn of Patricksen and Stiffun. Stiffun took him with one arm; then, curling one leg round his head and winding the other round his waist, he planted his head in his chest, and crushing his ribs with one hand he gave a mighty heave, and clasping the

play about him) which are bound to tell, though, of course, you were not bound to tell them. Ha, ha! who talked about thunder-storms, and passions, and powers and emotions, and sulphur-mines, and heartless governors, and wicked brothers? Read on my bonny boy. *Vous m'en direz des nouvelles*, but don't call this a novel. It's a right-down regular Saga.—C. A."

ground, as with the hoofs of an ox, he flung him some two hundred yards away, and went and married Rachel the Governor's daughter. That night he broke Patricksen's back, as if he had been a stick of sugar-candy. After this he took his wife home, and often beat her, or set his mother on her. But one day she happened to mention Patricksen, so he fled, cowed, humiliated, cap in hand, to Manxland, but left to her her child, her liberator, her Fason, so that she might span her little world of shame and pain on the bridge of Hope's own rainbow. She did this every day, and no one in all Iceland, rugged, hungry, cold Iceland, knew how she did it. It was a pretty trick.

CHAPTER II.

THIS is the tale of the Isle of Man, the island of Matt Mylchreest, and Nary Crowe, but plenty of vultures, the island of Deemsters, and Keys, and Kirk Maughold, and Port y Vullin. Here at the Lague lived Adam Fatsister, the Deputy Governor, who had been selected for that post because he owned five hundred hungry acres, six hungrier sons, a face like an angel's in homespun, a flaccid figure, and a shrewd-faced wife, named Ruth. Hither came Stiffun, to beg shelter. The footman opened the door to him, but would have closed it had not Adam, with a lusty oath, bidden him to let the man in. Hereupon Stiffun's face softened, and the footman's dropped; but Orrors, with an Icelander's inborn courtesy, picked it up, dusted it, and returned it to its owner. Shortly afterwards, Stiffun became a bigamist and a wrecker,

and had another son, whom, in honor of the Manx-land Parliament, he christened Michael Moonkeys, and left him to be cared for by old Adam, whose daughter's name was Greeba. Stiffun, as I have said, was a wrecker, a wrecker on strictly Homeric principles, but a wrecker, nevertheless. When storm-winds blew, he was a pitcher and tosser on the ocean, but, like other pitchers, he went to the bad once too often, and got broken on the rocks. Then came Kane Wade, and Chalse, and Mylchreest, and they sang hymns to him.

"Ye've not lived a right life," said one.

"Now, by me sowl, ye've got to die," sang another.

"All flesh is as grass," roared a third.

Suddenly Fason stood beside his bedside. "This," he thought, "is my father. I must kill him." But he restrained himself by a superhuman effort—and that was the end of Orrors.

THE BOOK OF MICHAEL MOONKEYS.

CHAPTER III.

MICHAEL and Fason were both the sons of Orrors. They were both Homeric, and both fell in love with Greeba, who flirted outrageously with both. These coincidences are absolutely essential in a tale of simple human passions. But, to be short, Greeba married Michael, who had become First President of the second Icelandic Republic. Thus Greeba and Michael were at Reykjavik. Fason followed, spurred by a blind feeling of revenge. About this time Mrs. Fatsister took a dislike to her husband.

"Crinkum, crankum!" she said, you'd have me toil and moil while you pat your nose at the fire."

"Ruth," said Adam.

"Hoity toity!" cried she. "The house is mine. Away with you!" So poor old Adam also set out

for Reykjavik, and the boatman cried after him, "*Dy banne jee oo!*" and he immediately jeeooed, as you shall hear. Last, Greeba's six brothers packed up, and left for Reykjavik; and now that we have got all our characters safely there, or on the way, we can get on with the story. It may be mentioned, however, that Mrs. Adam found a fever in a neglected cattle-trough. Being a grasping woman, she caught it and took it home—and it killed her

CHAPTER IV.

RED FASON meant to kill Michael. That was plain. So he was tried by a Bishop and nine of his neighbors an hour or so after the attempt. And although the time was so short, all the witnesses had been collected, and all formalities completed. And Fason was dumb, but great of heart, and the Bishop condemned him to the sulphur-mines, for which he soon afterwards started with his long stride, and his shorn head, and his pallid face. Upon this the six brothers of Greeba arrived, spread calumnies, and were believed. Their names were Asher, Jacob, John, Thurstan, Stean, and Ross, but they preferred addressing one another as Jobbernowl, Wastrel, Gomerstang, Blubberhead, Numskull, and Blatherskite. It saved time, and made things pleasant all round. Michael quarrelled with his wife, and there is no knowing what

might have happened, if Gorgon Gorgonsen, at the head of some Danish soldiers, had not upset the Republic, and banished Michael to the sulphur-mines to join his brother.

THE BOOK OF RED FASON.

CHAPTER V.

Poor Adam arrived too late, yet he has his use in the tale, for his words to Gordon Gorgonsen were bitter words, such as the cruel old Governor liked not. And he harried him, and worried him, but without avail, for in Reykjavik money was justice, and Adam had spent his. What availed it that a gray silt should come up out of the deposits of his memory? That was a totally unmarketable commodity in Reykjavik, as Adam found to his cost. And in the end intending to shoot Michael they shot Fason. And yet it is perfectly certain that the next chapter of this Saga, had there been a next, would have found all the characters once more in the Isle of Man. For nothing is more surely established than this: that a good (or a bad) Icelander, when he dies (or

lives), goes always to the Isle of Man, and every self-respecting Manxman returns the compliment by going to Iceland. And thus are Sagas constructed. And this is the en

[THE END.]

The Captain.

Sek p. 120

THE

MATE OF THE MARLINSPIKE.*

By SHARK MUSSELL,

AUTHOR OF

"Erect with a Stove in her," "My Gyp made to Wheeze," "The Romance of a Penny Parlor." A Hook for the Bannock," "Found the Gal on Fire," "The Mystery of the Lotion Jar," The Jokes o' Lead," Etc., Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

We were in mid-ocean. Over the vast expanses of the oily sea no ripple was to be seen although Captain Babbijam kept his binoculars

* "Here you are, my hearty," writes the author, "this is a regular briny ocean story, all storms and thunderclaps and sails and rigging and roaring masts and bellying sails. How about 'avast heaving' and 'shiver my timbers,' and 'son of a sea-cook,' and all that? No, thank you; that kind of thing's played out. Marryat was all very well *in his day*, but that

levelled at the silent horizon for three-quarters of an hour by the saloon clock. Far away in the murky distance of the mysterious empyrean, a single star flashed with a weird brilliance down upon the death-like stillness of the immemorial ocean. Yet the good old *Marlinspike* was rolling from side to side and rising and falling as if the liquid expanse were stirred by the rush of a tempest instead of lying as motionless as a country congregation during the rector's sermon. Suddenly Captain Babbijam closed his binoculars with an angry snap, and turned to me. His face showed of a dark carmine under his white cotton night-cap.

"The silly old ship," he muttered, half to himself and half to me, "is trying to make heavy weather of it; but I'll be even with her, I'll be even with her."

day's gone. The public requires stories about merchant ships, and, by Neptune, the public shall have them, with all kinds of hairy villains and tempest-tossed wrecks and human interest and no end of humor, likewise word-pictures of ships and storms. That's me. So clear the decks, and here goes."

"You'll find it a very *odd* thing to do," I said to him, jocosely.

He sprang at me like a sea-horse, and reared himself to his full height before me.

"Come, Mr. Tugley," he continued, speaking in a low, meaning voice, "can you take a star?"

"Sometimes," I answered, humoring his strange fancy; "but there's only one about, and it seems a deuce of a long way off—however, I'll try;" and, with that, I reached my arm up in the direction of the solitary planet, which lay in the vast obscure like a small silver candlestick, with a greenish tinge in its icy sparkling, mirrored far below in the indigo flood of the abysmal sea, while a gray scud came sweeping up, no one quite knew whence, and hung about the glossy face of the silent luminary like the shreds of a wedding veil, scattered by a honeymoon quarrel across the deep spaces far beyond the hairy coamings of the booby-hatch.

"Fool!" said the Captain, softly, "I don't mean

that. If you can't take a star, can you keep a watch?"

"Well, as to that, Captain," said I, half shocked and half amused at his strange questionings, "I never take my own out in a crowd. It's one of Dent's best, given me by my aunt, and I've had it for nigh upon——"

But the Captain had left me, and was at that moment engaged on his after-supper occupation of jockeying a lee yard-arm, while the first mate, Mr. Sowster, was doing his best to keep up with his rough commanding officer by dangling to windward on the flemish horse, which, as it was touched in the wind and gone in the forelegs, stumbled violently over the buttery hatchway and hurled its venturesome rider into the hold.

9

CHAPTER II.

On the following morning we were sitting in the palatial saloon of the *Marlinspike*. We were all there, all the characters, that is to say, necessary for the completion of a first-class three-volume ocean novel. On my right sat the cayenne-peppery Indian Colonel, a small man with a fierce face and a tight collar, who roars like a bull and says, "Zounds, Sir," on the slightest provocation. Opposite to him was his wife, a Roman-nosed lady, with an imperious manner, and a Colonel-subduing way of curling her lip. On my left was the funny man. As usual he was of a sea-green color, and might be expected at any moment to stagger to a port-hole and call faintly for the steward. Further down the table sat two young nincompoops, brought on board specially in order that they might fulfil their destiny, and fill out my story, by falling in

love with the fluffy-haired English girl who was sitting between them, and pouting equally and simultaneously at both. There was also the stout German who talks about "de sturm und der vafes." And beside him was the statuesque English beauty, whose eyes are of the rich blackness of the tropic sky, whose voice has a large assortment of sudden notes of haughtiness, while the studied insolence of her manner first freezes her victims and then incontinently and inconsistently scorches them. Eventually her proud spirit will be tamed, probably by a storm, or a shipwreck, or by ten days in an open boat. I shall then secure your love, my peerless Araminta, and you will marry me and turn out as soft and gentle as the moss-rose which now nestles in your raven tresses. The Colonel was speaking.

"Zounds, Sir!" he was saying. "I don't know what you mean by effects. All mine are on board. What do you say, Mr. Tugley?" he went on, looking at me with a look full of corkscrews and broken glass, while his choleric face showed of a purple hue under the effort of utterance.

"Well, Colonel," I replied, in an off-hand way, so as not to irritate him, "I keep my best effects here," and, so saying, I produced my note-book, and tapped it significantly. "What, for instance, do you say to this?"

But, what follows, needs another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

I FOUND the place in my note-book, cleared my voice and began, "The ship was sailing gloriously under a press of canvas. Her foretopgallant-sail swelled to its cotton-like hue out of the black shadow of its incurving. High aloft, the swelling squares of her studding-sails gleamed in the misty sheen of the pale luminary, flinging her frosty light from point to point of the tapering masts, which rose, rose, rose into the morning air, as though with intent to pierce the glowing orb of day, poised in the heavens like one vast ball of liquid fire. Through the wind-hushed spaces of the canvas, where the foretopmaststay-sail——"

"I know that foretopmaststay-sail," said the funny man, suddenly. I withered him with a look, and turned over the page.

"Here," I said, "is another tip-topper. What do

you think of this for a storm?—'The liquid acclivities were rising taller, and more threatening. With a scream of passion the tortured ship hurled itself at their deep-green crests. Cascades of rain, and hail, and snow, were dashing down upon her unprotected bulwarks. The inky sky was one vast thunder-clap, out of which the steely shaft of an electric flash pierced its dazzling path into the heart of the raving deep. The scud——'"

"I know that scud," said a hateful voice. But, before I could annihilate its owner, the pale face of Mr. Spilkings, with his dead eyes turned in, dashed breathlessly into the saloon. "By all that's holy," he shouted, "the Captain's gone mad, and the crew have thrown off all disguise, We are manned by ourang-outangs!"

CHAPTER IV.

NEVER shall I forget the horrors of the scene that ensued. We clewed up the mizzen royal, we lashed the foretop to make it spin upon its heels. The second dog watch barked his shins to the bone, and a tail of men hauled upon the halliards to mast-head the yard. Nothing availed. We had to be wrecked and wrecked we were, and as I clasped Araminta's trustful head to my breast, the pale luminary sailing through the angry wreck glittered in phantasmal splendor on the scud which——

[Here the MS. ends unaccountably.—EDITOR OF *Punch*.]

ONE MAN IN A COAT.*

By JERICHO JERRYGO,

AUTHOR OF

"*Stage Faces*," "*Cheap Words of Chippy Chappie*," *Etc.*

CHAPTER I.

It was all the Slavey what got us into the mess. Have you ever noticed what a way a Slavey has of snuffling and saying, "Lor, Sir, oo'd 'a thought it?" on the slightest provocation. She comes into your room just as you are about to fill your finest two-handed meerschaum with

* This novel was carefully wrapped up in some odd leaves of Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*, and was accompanied by a letter in which the author declared that the book was worth £3,000, but that to "save any more blooming trouble," he would be willing to take the prize of £1,000 by return of post, and say no more about it.—Ed.

Navy-cut, and looks at you with a far-away look in her eyes, and a wisp of hair winding carelessly round the neck of her print dress. You murmur something in an insinuating way about that box of Vestas you bought last night from the blind man who stands outside "The Old King of Prussia" pub round the corner. Then one of her hairpins drops into the fireplace, and you rush to pick it up, and she rushes at the same moment, and your head goes crack against her head, and you see some stars, and a weary kind of sensation comes over you, and just as you feel inclined to send for the cat's-meat man down the next court to come and fetch you away to the Dogs' Home, in bounces your landlady, and with two or three "Well, I nevers!" and "There's an imperent 'ussey for you!" nearly bursts the patent non-combustible bootlace you lent her last night to hang the brass locket round her neck by.

Pottle says his landlady's different, but then Pottle always was a rum 'un, and nobody knows

"Two sizes too small for me."

See p. 136

what old rag-and-bone shop he gets his landladies from. I always get mine only at the best places, and I advise everybody to do the same. I mentioned this once to Bill Moser, who looks after the calico department in the big store in the High Street, but he only sniffed, and said, "Garne, you don't know everythink!" which was rude of him. I might have given him one for himself just then, but I didn't. I always was a lamb; but I made up my mind that next time I go into the ham-and-beef shop kept by old Mother Moser I'll say something about "'orses from Belgium" that the old lady won't like.

Did you ever go into a ham-and-beef shop? It's just like this. I went into Moser's last week. Just when I got in I tripped over some ribs of beef lying in the doorway, and before I had time to say I preferred my beef without any boot-blacking, I fell head-first against an immense sirloin on the parlor table.

Mrs. Moser called all the men who were loafing around, and all the boys and girls, and they carved

away at the sirloin for five hours without being able to get my head out. At last an old gentleman, who was having his dinner there, said he couldn't bear whiskers served up as a vegetable with his beef. Then they knew they'd got near my face, so they sent away the Coroner and pulled me out, and when I got home my coat-tail pockets were full of ham-bones. The boy did that—young varmint! I'll ham-bone him when I catch him next!

CHAPTER II.

LET me see, what was I after? Oh, yes, I remember. I was going to tell you about our Slavey and the pretty pickle she got us into. I'm not sure it wasn't Pottle's fault. I said to him, just as he was wiping his mouth on the back of his hand after his fourth pint of shandy gaff, "Pottle, my boy," I said, "you're no end of a chap for shouting 'Cash forward!' so that all the girls in the shop hear you and say to one another, 'My, what a lovely voice that young Pottle's got!' But you're not much good at helping a pal to order a new coat, nor for the matter of that, in helping him to try it on." But Pottle only hooked up his nose and looked scornful.

Well, when the coat came home the Slavey brought it up, and put it on my best three-legged chair, and then flung out of the room with a toss

of her head, as much as to say, "'Ere's extravagance!"

First I looked at the coat, and then the coat seemed to look at me. Then I lifted it up and put it down again, and sent out for three-ha'porth of gin. Then I tackled the blooming thing again. One arm went in with a ten-horse power shove. Next I tried the other. After no end of fumbling I found the sleeve. "In you go!" I said to my arm, and in he went, only it happened to be the breast-pocket. I jammed, the pocket creaked, but I jammed hardest, and in went my fist, and out went the pocket.

Then I sat down, tired and sad, and the lodging-house cat came in and lapped up the milk for my tea, and Moser's bull-dog just looked me up, and went off with the left leg of my trousers, and the landlady's little boy peeped round the door and cried, "Oh, Mar, the poor gentleman's red in the face—I'm sure he's on fire!"

And the local fire-brigade was called up, and they pumped on me for ten minutes, and then wrote

"Inextinguishable" in their note-books, and went home: and all the time I couldn't move, because my arms were stuck tight in a coat two sizes too small for me.

CHAPTER III.

THE Slavey managed——

[No, thank you. No more.—EDITOR OF *Punch.*]

Colonel Zedekiah D. Gobang.

See p. 141.

THROUGH SPACE ON A FORMULA.*

By RULES SPURN,

AUTHOR OF

"Gowned and Curled in Eighty Stays," "Twenty Thousand Tweaks Sundered the Flea," "A Tea with Ice," "A Doctor on Rocks and Peppermint," "A Cab-Fare from 'The Sun,'" "The Confidence of the Continent," "Attorney to Dissenters up at Perth," "Lieutenant Scattercash," Etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE iceberg was moving. There was no doubt of it. Moving with a terrible sinuous motion. Occasionally an incautious ironclad approached like a foolish hen, and pecked at the moving mass. Then

* "This," writes the auther, "is one of my best and freshest, although on a moderate computation it must be my thousand and first, or so. But I have really lost count. Still it's grand to talk in large numbers of leagues, miles, vastnesses, secrets, mysteries, and impossible sciences. Some pedants imagine that I write in French. That's absurd, for every schoolboy

there was a slight crash, followed by a mild convulsion of masts, and spars and iron plates, and 100-ton guns, then two or three gurgles and all was still. The iceberg passed on smiling in triumph, and British Admirals wrote to the *Times* to declare that they had known from the first that H.M.S. *Thunderbomb* had been so faultily constructed, as to make a contest with a hen-coop a certainty for the hen-coop.

And still the iceberg was moving. Within its central chamber sat a venerable man, lightly clad in nankeen breeches, a cap of liberty, and a Liberty silk shirt. He was writing cabalistically. He did not know why, nor did he know what "cabalistically" meant. This was his punishment. Why was he to be punished? Those who read shall hear. The walls of the chamber were fitted with tubes, and electric wires, and knobs and buttons. A bright fire burned on the hearth. The thick Brus-

knows (and lots of them have told me) that I write only in English or in American. I have some highly dried samples of vivid adventure ready for immediate consumption. Twopence more and up goes the donkey, up, up, up to be a satellite to an undiscovered star. Brave Donkey! I follow.—R. S."

sels carpet was littered with pot-boilers, all fizzing, and sputtering, and steaming, like so many young Curates at a Penny Reading. Suddenly the Philosopher looked up. He spoke to himself. "Everything is ready," he said, and pressed a button by his side. There was a sound as of a Continent expectorating, a distant noise seemed to twang, the door opened, and a tall lantern-jawed gentleman, wearing a goat-beard and an expression of dauntless cunning, stepped into the room.

"I guess you were waiting round for me," said Colonel Zedekiah D. Gobang (for it was indeed he), and sat down in an empty armchair, as if nothing had happened.

The Philosopher appeared not to notice. "Next character, please," he said, pulling out a long stop, and placing his square leg on the wicket which gave admission to his laboratory, while he waited for the entrance of the Third Man. There came a murmur like the buzz of a ton of blasting powder in a state of excitement. A choir of angels seemed to whisper "Beefsteak and Pale Ale," as Lord John

Bullpup dashed, without a trace of emotion, into the room, and sneezed three times without stopping to wipe his boots on the mat.

"One more," said the Philosopher. He hurled himself, feet first, at the ceiling, knocked his head against the floor, and called down the tube. "*J'y suis!*" came the answer and the typical, light-hearted Frenchman, M. le Docteur Reversi, with his thousand thunders, and his blue lower chest, tripped jauntily up to the other three. "And now," remarked the Philosopher, "we have got the lot complete. The story can start. Hurry up! Hark forrard! *En avant!*"

CHAPTER II.

"LEND me your ears," said the Philosopher. They lent them, but without interest. Yet they were all keen business men. "Attention, my friends!" he continued, somewhat annoyed. "You know why I have summoned you. We have to make another journey together. The moon, the sea, the earth—we have voyaged and journeyed to them, and they are exhausted. It remains to visit the Sun, and to perform the journey in an iceberg. Do you see? Colonel Gobang will supply the craft, Lord John Bullpup the stupid courage, and you, M. le Docteur," he added, admiringly, "will of course take the cake."

He paused, and waited for Lord John's reply. It came prompt, and in the expected words.

"Is it a plum-pudding cake?" said Lord John.

The rest laughed heartily. They loved their jokes, small and old.

"Are we agreed?"

"We are."

"Have you anything to ask?"

"Nothing. When do we start?"

"We are on our way."

"Shall we not melt as we approach?"

"Certainly not."

"How so?"

"We shall have a constant frost."

"Are you sure?"

"Certain. I have taken in a supply of *Matinées*, and a stock of Five-act Tragedies."

"Good. But how to raise the wind?"

Scarcely had the question been asked, when a frightful explosion shook the iceberg to its foundations. The Doctor rushed to the gas-bag. It was empty. He frowned. Lord John was smoking his pipe; the Colonel was turning over the pages of an old Algebra. He muttered to himself, "That ought to figure it out. If x = the amount of non-com-

pressible fluid consumed by a given laborer in *y* days, find, by the substitution of poached eggs for kippered herrings, how many tea-cups it will take to make a transpontine hurricane. Yes," he went on, "that's it. Yes, Sirree." And at these words the vast mass of congealed water rose majestically out of the ocean, and floated off into the nebular hypothesis. But the Philosopher had vanished.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the explosion narrated in the last chapter took place, the Philosopher had been looking out of the window. The shock had hurled him with the speed of a pirate 'bus through the air. Soon he became a speck. Shortly afterwards he reached a point in his flight situated exactly 40,000 miles over a London publisher's office. There was a short contest. Centrifugal and centripetal fought for the mastery, and the latter was victorious. The publisher was at home. The novel was accepted, and the Philosopher started to rejoin his comrades lost in the boundless tracts of space.

CHAPTER IV.

"My faith," said Lord John, "I am getting tired of this. Shall we never reach the Sun?"

"Courage, my friend," was the well-known reply of the brave little Doctor. "We deviated from our course one hair's-breadth on the twelfth day. This is the fortieth day, and by the formula for the precession of the equinoxes, squared by the parallelogram of an ellipsoidal bath-bun fresh from the glass cylinder of a refreshment bar, we find that we are now travelling in a perpetual circle at a distance of one billion marine gasmeters from the Sun. I have now accounted for the milk in the cocoa-nut."

"But not," said the Philosopher, as he popped up through a concealed trap-door, "for the hair outside. That remains for another volume." With

that, he rang a gong. The iceberg splintered into a thousand pieces. The voyagers were each hurled violently down into their respective countries, where a savage public was waiting to devour them.

[THE END.]

Rouser hath the Rat in view. *See p.* 157

MARIAN MUFFET:

*A ROMANCE OF BLACKMORE.**

By R. D. EXMOOR,

AUTHOR OF

"Born a Spoon," "Paddock Rowel," "Wit and Witty," "Tips for Marriers," Scare a Fawn," "'Brellas for Rain," Etc., Etc

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CHAPTER I.

FATE, that makes sport alike of peasants and of kings, turning the one to honor and a high seat, and making the other to lie low in the estimation of men, though haply (as 'tis said in our parish)

* "This," writes Mr. Exmoor, "is another of my simple tales. Yet I send it forth into the world thinking that haply there may be some, and they not of the baser sort, who reading therein as the humor takes them, may draw from it nurture for their minds. For truly it is in the nature of fruit-trees, whereof, without undue vaunting, I may claim to know somewhat that the birds of the air, the tits, the wrens, ay, even unto

he think no small beer of himself, hath seemingly ordained that I, Thomas Tiddler, should set down in order some doings wherein I had a share. And herein I make no show of learning, being but an undoctrined farmer and not skilled in the tricks of style, as the word is in these parts, but trusting simply to strength and honesty (whereof, God knows, there is but little beyond the limits of our farm), and to that breezy carriage of the pen which favoreth a plain man treading sturdily the winding paths and rough places of his native tongue. Notwithstanding I take no small encouragement from this, that whereas of those that have made to my knowledge the bravest boasting and the loudest puffing (though of this I am loth to speak,

the saucy little sparrows, whose firm spirit in warfare hath ever been one of my chiefest marvels, should gather in the branches seeking for provender. So in books, and herein too I have some small knowledge, those that are of the ripest sort are ever the first to be devoured. And if the public be pleased, how shall he that made the book feel aught but gratitude. Therefore I let it go, not being blind in truth to the faults thereof, but with humble confidence too in much compensating merit."

never having had a stomach for the work), the writings often perish neglectfully and nothing said, some, writing afar in quiet places removed from the busy rabblement of towns, not seldom steer their course to fame and riches, whereof, thanks be to Heaven, I never yet had covetousness, deeming theirs the happier lot to whom a dry crust with haply a slice of our good country cheese and a draught of the foaming cider brings contentment. Each to his own fashion, say I, and the fashion of the Tiddlers hath always been in a manner plain and unvarnished, like to the large oak press wherein mother stores her Sunday gown and other woman's finery such as the mind of man, being at best but a coarse week-day creature, hath never fairly conceived. But lo! I am tarrying on my way, losing myself in a maze of cheap fancies, while the reader perchance yawns and stretches his limbs as though for bed. All I know is paper and ink are cheaper than when I began to write.

CHAPTER II.

Now it fell on a Summer morning, I being then but newly come home from the Farmers' College in the ancient town of Cambridge, that our whole household was gathered together in our parlor. Mother sat by the head of the great table, ladling out a savory mess of porridge, not rashly, as the custom of some is, but carefully, like a prudent housewife, guarding her own. And by her side sat Molly and Betty, her daughters, and next to them the maids, and they that pertained to the work of the house. First came old Polly Thistledew, gaunt of face, and parched of skin, the wrinkles running athwart her face, and over her hooked nose, like to the rivers drawn with much labor of meandering pen in the schoolboys' maps, though for such my marks were always low, I being better skilled in the giving of raps with the closed fist than in

the making of maps with inky fingers—a bootless toil, as it always hath seemed to me. Next to her sat Sally, the little milkmaid, casting coy glances at mother, who would have none of them, but with undue sternness, as I thought then, and still think, tossed them back to the shame-faced Sally. Lower down sat John Tooker, "Girt Jan Doubleface" he was ever called, not without a sly hint of increasing obesity, for John, though a mighty man of thews and sinews, was no small trencherman, and, as the phrase is, did himself right royally whenever porridge was in question. All these sat, peaceably swallowing, while I, at the table's foot, faced mother, stirring my steaming bowl with my forefinger, forgetting the heat thereof, but not daring to wince, lest Betty, whose tongue cut shrewdly when she had a mind, should make sport of me.

CHAPTER III.

ALTHOUGH I had, for the most part, so very stout an appetite that my bowl stood always first for the refilling, I had no desire for my food that day but idly sat and stirred, and the burden of my thoughts wore deeply inward with the dwelling of my mind on this view and on that of it. But, on a sudden, what a turmoil, what a rising of maids, what a jumping on chairs, what a drawing up of gowns, and what a scurrying! For, out of a corner, comes the great brown rat, gliding sedately, and never so much as asking by your leave or with your leave. Then mother's old tom-cat *Trouncer*, slowly rising, stretches his limbs, and bares his claws, making ready for what is to come, but not, methinks, with much alacrity for the conflict, for rats have teeth, as *Trouncer* knows—ay, and can use them to much purpose. Therefore *Trouncer*, making belief to be brave, as is the custom both of cats and of others that walk on two legs, and have thumbs to their

fore-paws, gathers himself to the spring, but springs not. Then comes Girt Jan's terrier, *Rouser*, at last —where hath the terrier been tarrying? Terriers should not tarry—and, with scant ceremony, leaps upon *Trouncer*. Cuff, cuff go the claws. *Trouncer* swears roundly. Nay, *Trouncer*, 'tis a coward's part to fly beneath the chair. To him, good *Rouser*, to him, my man. But *Rouser* hath forgot the clawbearer, though his bleeding nose for many a day shall remember. *Rouser* hath the rat in view. Round the parlor they go, helter-skelter, *Rouser* on the tracks of the life-desiring rat, while the maids upon the chairs show ankles, in proof of terror, until, lo! he hath him pinned fast, never more to stir, or clean his whiskers in rat-land.

And then all come down, and Jan boasts loudly how he all but trod him flat, ay, and could have done so had the rat not fled in terror of his boot; and *Trouncer* returns, smugly purring, and mother rates the blushing maids.

And I to the fields, having work to do, but liking not the doing.

CHAPTER IV.

Now I with *Rouser* at my heels went manfully on my way. Gaily I went over the parched brown wastes where lately the flood had lain heavy upon the land, past the whispering copses of fir and beech and oak that top the upland, through the yellowing corn that stands waving golden promise in the valley, till I came to where the land bends suddenly with a sharp turn from the eastward whence a pearly brook, now swollen to a roaring torrent, babbles bravely over the stones. Sudden I stopped as though a palsy had gripped me, though of the Tiddlers, as is well known, none hath ever suffered of a palsy, they being for the most part a lusty race, and apt for enduring moisture both within and without. Never till my dying day shall I forget the sight that met my eyes. For there, seated upon a tuffet, her beautiful blue eyes fixed in horror and

despair, her jug of curds and whey scarce tasted, was my Marian, while beside her, lolling at ease with the slothful stretch of his great limbs, and the flames as of Tophet in his fierce eyes, sat Spider, the great black-haired giant Spider that would make a feast of her.

I know not how I ran, nor what mighty strength was in my limbs, but in a moment I was with them, and his hairy throat was in my clutch. Quickly he turned upon me and fain had freed himself. Our breast-bones cracked in the conflict, his arms wound round and round me, and a hideous gleam of triumph was in his face. Thrice he had me off my feet, but at the fourth close I swayed him to the right, and then with one last heave I flung him on his back, and had the end of it, leaving him dead and flattened where he lay.

CHAPTER V.

THEN gently I bore my Marian home, and mother greeted her fondly, saying, "Miss Muffet, I presume?" which pleased me, thinking it only right that mother should use ceremony with my love. But she, poor darling, lay quiet and pale, scarce knowing her own happiness or the issue of the fight. For 'tis the way of women ever to faint if the occasion serve and a man's arms be there to prop them. And often in the warm summer-time, when the little lads and lassies gather to the plucking of buttercups and daisies, likening them gleefully to the gold and silver of a rich man's coffers, my darling, now grown matronly, sitteth on the tuffet in their midst, and telleth the tale of giant Spider and his fate.

[THE END.]

SONOGUN.*

By Miss REDNA TRIAL.

AUTHOR OF

"*Wee Jew*," "*A Lardy Horseman*," "*Spun by Prating*,"
Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

Ah me, how shall we know the true,
How mark the old, how fix the new ?
Or teach the babe in arms to say,
"Base, bold, bad boys are cheap to-day ?"

NARR. *The White Witch.*

SONOGUN scarcely knew what to do. He had been up all day, wandering about the lanes which

* "I think you will like this book," writes the fair author ; "its tone is elevated and its intention good. The philosophic infidel must be battered into belief by the aid of philosophy mingled with kindness. Take Renan, Haeckel, Huxley, Strauss and Draper—the names, I mean ; it is quite useless and might do harm to read their books,—shake them up together and make into a paste, add some poetical excerpts of a moral tendency, and spread thick over a violent lad smarting under a

surrounded the family mansion. A fitful light blazed in his magnificent eyes, his brow contracted until it assumed that peculiarly battered expression which is at once characteristic of a bent penny and consistent with the most sublime beauty. To be properly appreciated he must be adequately described. Imagine then a young man of twenty, who was filled with the bitterest hatred of the world, which he had forsworn two years ago, on being expelled from school for gambling. There was about him an air of haughty reserve and of indifference which was equally haughty. This it was his habit to assume in order to meet any neighbors who happened to meet him, and the result naturally was that he was not so popular as some inferior beings who were less haughty. In fact

sense of demerit justly scorned. Turn him out into the world, then scrape clean and return him to his true friends. Cards, race-meetings, and billiards may be introduced *ad lib.*, also passion, prejudice, a faithful dog, and an infant prattler. Death-scenes form an effective relief. I have several which only need a touch or two to be complete. This is the way to please the publishers and capture the public. Try it, and let me know what you think.—R. T."

he had a very short way with his relations, for whose benefit he kept a shell into which he frequently retired. He was dangerously handsome, in the Italian style, and often played five bars of music over and over again with one finger, to please his mother. Some women thought he was an Apollo, others described him as an Adonis, but everybody invariably ended or began by calling him an ancient Roman. He was sarcastic, satiric and very strong. Indeed, on one occasion, he absolutely broke the feathers on a hand-screen and on another he cracked three walnuts in sucession without looking up. But, oh, the sufferings that young heart had undergone! Slapped by his nurse, reproved by his mother, expelled by his schoolmaster, and shunned by the society of the country-side, it was small wonder that the brave soul revolted against its fellow-men, and set its jaws in a proud resolve to lash the unfeeling world with the contempt of a spirit bruised beyond the power of such lotions as the worldly-wise recommended for the occasion. He whistled to his dog

Stray, and clenched his fists in impotent anger. An expression of gentleness stole over his features. The idea was suggestive. He, too, the proud, the honorable, the upright would steal, and thus punish the world. He looked into his make-up box. It contained bitter defiance, angry scorn, and a card-sharper's pack of cards. He took them out; and thus Sonogun, the expelled atheist, made up his mind.

CHAPTER II.

On the green table of life the cards fall in many ways, and the proud king often has to bow his head before the meek and unassuming ace.—BINNS.

AND now began for Sonogun a time of moral stress and torture such as he had never anticipated. It is an old saying, and perhaps (who knows?) a truism, that virtue is its own reward, not perhaps, the reward that ambitious people look for, but the easy consciousness of superiority which comes to those who feel themselves to be on a higher level than the rest of the world, which struggles on a lowel level. Another philosopher, nameless, but illustrious, has declared, in burning words, that "Honesty is the best policy," best in some form, perhaps hardly understood now, but no less real because we are unable to appraise it in the current

"He had given his coat to a hot-potato-man."

coin of the realm over which Her Most Gracious Majesty, whom may Heaven preserve, holds sway. But Sonogun had never thought of Heaven. To him, young, proud, gloomy, and moody, Heaven had seemed only——(Several chapters of theological disquisition omitted.—Ed.) The clink of the billiard-balls maddened him, the sight of a cue made him rave like a maniac. One evening he was walking homeward to Drury Lane. He had given his coat to a hot-potato-man, deeming it, in his impulsive way, a bitter satire on the world's neglect, that the senseless tubers should have jackets, while there purveyor lacked a coat. The rain was pouring down, but it mattered little to him. He had wrapped himself in that impenetrable mantle of cold scorn, and thus he watched with a moody air the crowd of umbrella-carrying respectabilities, who hurried on their way without a thought of him. Suddenly some one slapped him on the back, and, as he turned round, he found himself face to face with a couple of seedy-looking gentlemen.

"I perceive," began Sonogun, "that you hate

the world, having suffered much injustice from it."

"We do; we have!" was the cordial reply.

"I, too," continued Sonogun, "have many grievances. But tell me who and what are you?"

"Our names are unknown even to ourselves," replied his new friends, for friends he felt them to be. "By profession we are industrial knights. That should be sufficient."

"It is;—more than sufficient," said the proud, honorable young man. "I will be one of you. We will take it out of the world together."

The bargain thus made was soon ratified. They procured cards, Sonogun whistled to his dog *Stray*, and they all set out together to the nearest railway station to pick up their victims. This is the usual method, and thus card-sharpers are manufactured.

CHAPTER III.

Nay, this is truth, though heart-string break,'
And youth with gloomy brows hears:—
Howe'er you try, you shall not make
Silk purses out of sows' ears.

W. BRAUN. *Soul-tatters.*

In the present there is absolute redemption. Though a gulf should yawn, go not you to sleep, but rub your eyes; be up and doing.—JAKES.

IN the meantime, Sonogun's cousin, Acis Arrant, generally known to his jocular intimates as Knave Arrant, had been living in luxury with his cousin's weak mother, whom he had contrived to marry. To effect this, however, he had been compelled to tear a will into little pieces, and had at the same time ruined that peace of his mind which he often gave to Sonogun. The unfortunate consequence was, that Sonogun did not value it in the least, and always returned it to him. And thus the relations of the two men, who

should have been friends, the guardian and the ward, were always on a hostile footing, which only the most delicate handling could have healed. Acis was not happy. When his glass told him he was old, he had no repartee ready, and could only speculate gloomily on the disagreeable fate which had compelled him to take part in a modern novel, and had evidently told him off to pass away into the unseen in Chapter 40.

But, of course, Gladys and her father, the doctor, knew nothing about all this. Gladys always looked happy; her hair, her mouth, her eyes, her ears, even her little unformed nose, all looked as happy as possible. She was a pleasant little patient moralizer, with a double escapement action for great occasions. On this evening all the family was gathered together, including the inevitable infant, whose prattle serves to soothe the gloomy perversity of morose heroes. On such an evening as this Sonogun had seen them all years ago, and, though he was standing in the garden and all the windows were shut, he had heard every

single whisper of the family conversation. The Doctor seemed to be troubled, and Gladys came up to him in her caressing way.

"My dear," he said, simply, "Sonogun is in trouble, and we must rescue him." No more was said, but the next moment Gladys and her father had left by the London express.

CHAPTER IV.

All things are fair that are not dark;
Yet all are dark that are not fair.
And the same cat that slays the lark,
Itself is often killed by care.—BOHER.

SONOGUN had seen a notice in a railway-carriage. "Beware of card-sharpers" was printed upon it, and it flashed upon him, with the force of a revelation, that it must be meant for him. Once more he made up his mind. He would fly. Fear lent him a spare pair of second-hand wings. He whistled to his dog *Stray*, and having thrown Haeckel and Renan out of the window, he flapped twice, and then soared up, *Stray* following as best he could. It was very dark, and the clouds were threatening. For a long time he avoided them, but at length he fell into a particularly damp one, and would inevitably have been drowned, had not the sagacious *Stray* brought men to his assistance. And

thus Sonogun, the scoffer, the agnostic, the moody, gloomy, morose, cast-iron, Roman-faced misanthrope, got home. That same evening he changed his clothes and his character, and on the following day married Gladys.

[THE END.]

GERMFOOD.*

By MARY MORALLY,

Author of "Ginbitters!" "Ardart," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS asleep and dreaming—dreaming dreadful, horrible, soul-shattering dreams—dreams that flung me head-first out of bed, and then flung me back into bed off the uncarpeted floor of my chamber.

* The MS. of this remarkable novel was tied round with scarlet ribbons, and arrived in a case which had been once used for the packing of bottles of rum, or some other potent spirit. It is dedicated in highly uncomplimentary terms to "*Messieurs les Marronneurs glacés de Paris.*" With it came a most extraordinary letter, from which we make, without permission, the following startling extracts, "Ha! Ha! likewise Fe Fo Fum. I smell blood, galloping, panting, whiriing, hurling, throbbing, maddened blood. My brain is on fire, my pen is a flash of lightning. I see stars, three stars, that is to say, one of the best brands plucked from the burning. I'm

But I did not wake—why should I?—it was unnecessary—I wanted to dream—I had to dream and therefore I dreamt. I was walking home from a cheap restaurant in one of the poorer quarters of Paris. "Poorer quarters," is a nice vague term. There are many poorer quarters in a large city. This was one of them. Let that suffice to the critical pedants who clamor for accuracy and local color. Accuracy! pah! Shall the soaring soul of a three-volumer be restrained by the debasing fetters of a grovelling exactitude? Never! I will tell you what. If I choose, I who speak to you, *moi qui vous parle*, the Seine shall run red with the blood of murdered priests, and there shall be a tide in it where no tide ever was before, close to Paris itself, the

going to make your flesh creep. I'll give you fits, paralytic fits, epileptic fits, fits of hysteria, all at the same time. Have I ever been in Paris? Never. Do I know the taste of absinthe? How dare you ask me such a question. Am I a woman? Ask me another. Ugh! it's coming, the demon is upon me. I must write three murderous volumes. I must, I must! What was that shriek? and that? and that? Unhand me, snakes! Oh! ! ! !—M. M."

home of the *Marrons Glacés*, and into the river I shall plunge a corpse with upturned face and glassy, staring, haunting, dreadful eyes, and the tide shall turn, the tide that never was on earth, or sky, or sea, it shall turn in my second volume for one night only, and carry the corpse of my victim back, back, back under bridges innumerable, back into the heart of Paris. Dreadful, isn't it? *Allons, mon ami. Qu'est-ce-qu'-il-y-a. Je ne sais quoi. Mon Dieu!* There's idiomatic French for you, all sprinkled out of a cayenne pepper-pot to make the local color hot and strong! Bah! let us return to our muttons!

CHAPTER II.

WHAT was that? Something yellow, and spotted —something sinuous and lithe, with crawling, cat-like motion. No, no! Yes, yes!! A leopard of the forest had issued from a side street, a *cul de sac*, as the frivolous sons of Paris, the Queen of Vice, call it. It was moving with me, stopping when I stopped, galloping when I galloped, turning somersaults when I turned them. And then it spoke to me—spoke, yes, spoke, this thing of the desert—this wild phantasm of a brain distraught by over-indulgence in *marron glacés*, the curse of *ma patrie*, and its speech was as the scent of scarlet poppies, plucked from the grave of a discarded mistress.

"Thou shalt write," it said, "for it is thine to reform the world." I shuddered. The conversational "thou" is fearful at all times; but, ah, how true to nature, even the nature of a leopard

of the forest. The beast continued—"But thou shalt write in English."

"Spare me!" I ventured to interpose.

"In English," it went on, inexorably—"in hysterical, sad, mad, bad English. And the tale shall be of France—France, where the ladies always leave the dinner-table before the men. Note this, and use it at page ninety of thy first volume. And thy French shall be worse than thy English, for thou shalt speak of a *frissonement*, and thy friends shall say, "*Nous blaguons le chose.*"

"Stop!" I cried in despair, "stop, fiend!—this is too much!" I sprang at the monster, and seized it by the throat. Our eyes, peering into each other's, seemed to ravage out, as by fire, the secrets hidden in our hearts. My blood hurled itself through my veins. There was something clamorous and wild in it. Then I fell prone on the ground, and remembered that I had eaten one *marron* for dinner. This explained everything, and I remembered no more till I came to myself, and found the divisional surgeon busily engaged upon me with a *pompe d'estomac.*

"*A Leopard of the Forest.*"

CHAPTER III.

My father, M. le Duc de Spepsion, belonged to one of the oldest French families. He had many old French customs, amongst others that of brushing his bearded lips against my cheek. He was a stern man, with a severe habit of addressing me as "*Mon fils.*" Generally he disapproved of my proceedings, which was, perhaps, not unnatural, taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration. Why have I mentioned him? I know not, save that even now, degraded as I am, memories of better things sometimes steal over me like the solemn sound of church-bells pealing in a cathedral belfry. But I have done with home, with father, with patriotism, with claret, with walnuts, and with all simple pleasures. *Ca va sans dire.* They talk to me of God, and Nature. The words are meaningless to me. Are there realities behind these words

—realities that can touch the heart of a confirmed *marronneur?* Cold and pitiless, Nature sits aloft like a mathematician, with his balance regulating the storm-pulse of this troubled world. Bah! I fling myself in her teeth. I brazen it out. She quails. For, since the accursed food passed my lips, the strength of a million demons is in me. I am pitiless. I laugh to think of the fool I once was in the days when I fed myself on *Baba au Rhum*, and other innocent dishes. Now I have knowledge. I am my own god. I glance haughtily into——

[Ten rhapsodical pages omitted.—Ed. *Punch.*]

But there came into my life a false priest, who was like the ghost of a fair lost god—and because he was a fair lost, the cabmen loved him not—and he had to die, and lie in the Morgue—the Morgue where murdered men and women love to dwell—and thus he should discover the Eternal Secret!

CHAPTER IV.

AGAIN—again—again! The moon rose, shimmering like a *Marron Glacé* over Paris. Oh! Paris, beauteous city of the lost. Surely in Babylon or in Nineveh, where Semiramis of old queened it over men, never was such madness. Madness did I say? Why? What did I mean? Tush! the struggle is over, and I am calm again, though my blood still hums tumultuously. The world is very evil. My father died choked by a *marron*, I, too, am dead—I who have written this rubbish—I am dead, and sometimes, as I walk, my loved one glides before me in "aërial phantom shape," as on page four, Vol. II. But I am dead—dead and buried—and over my grave an avenue of gigantic chestnuts reminds the passer-by of my fate; and on my tombstone it is written, "Here lies one who danced a cancan and ate *marrons glacés* all day. Be warned!"

[THE END.]

GASPS.*

By OLPH SCHREION,

Author of "Screams," "The Allegory of an Asian Ranche."

CHAPTER I.

TANT' SANNIE was stewing *kraut* in the old Dutch saucepan. The scorching rays of the African sun were beating down upon Bonaparte Blenkins who was doing his best to be sun-like by beating Waldo. His nose was red and disagree-

* "You will perceive," writes the author of the following story, "that this is allegorical, but it is not by any means necessary that you should understand it. The chief charm of allegorical writing is its absolute freedom from the trammels of convention. You write something large and vague, with any amount of symbols thrown in. The words flow quite easily; you cover scores of pages. Then you read it over again next morning. If you understand it so little as to think some other fellow must have written it, you may be quite certain it is an allegory. When you print it, your public reads into it all kinds of mysterious and morbid religious emotions, and confused

able. He was something like Huckleberry Finn's Dauphin, an amusing, callous, cruel rogue, but less resourceful. Tant' Sannie laughed; it was so pleasant to see a German boy beaten black and blue. But the Hottentot servants merely gaped. It was their custom.

But in the middle distance Life was playing marbles with the Unknown. And the Unknown said unto Life, "Give me an alley-tor." But Life replied, "Nay, for the commoneys are lying well, and the thumb of him that aimeth is seasoned unto the stroke." And the Unknown beat his sable wings together, and one black feather flitted far into the breast of the day and fell to earth. And there came a fair-haired Child plucking flowers in the desert with brows bent in thought.

And Life said unto the Child, "Play with me."

misinterpretations of life-problems, and everybody tacks on his own special explanation. That being so, it is quite unnecessary for you to explain things—which saves a great deal of trouble. The plan is an excellent one. Try it.—Yours, allegorically, O. S."

Tant' Sannie stewing Kraut.

And the Unknown said, "Play with me."

But the Child raised its soft hand slowly and the tender fingers grew apart, and its thumb was poised in thought upon its nose, and it spake not at all. And the feather flitted far, far over the waste, and men came forth and gazed upon it, but it heeded them not.

Then said Life, "I am strong. Kings have need of me and earth is my dominion." But the Unknown gathered up the scattered marbles, concealing them craftily, and answered only this—"I am a greater than Life."

And the Child strayed onwards and the feather flitted, and Tant' Sannie still stewed *kraut* in the old Dutch saucepan. And Bonaparte Blenkins was glad.

CHAPTER II.

CRUELTY, cruelty, cruelty—all is cruelty! Boys are beaten; oxen are stabbed till the blood bursts forth; happy, industrious, dung-collecting beetles are bitten in two by careless, happy, beetle-collecting dogs—everything is wicked and cruel. The Kaffir has beautiful legs, but he will kick his wife, and Tant' Sannie, alas! will not be there to drop a pickle-tub on his head. And over everything hangs that inscrutable charm which hovers forever for the human intellect over the incomprehensible and shadowy. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico*, I might say, but I prefer the longer phrase.

And I stood at the gate of Heaven, I and Tant' Sannie; and we spoke to everybody quite affably; and they all had time to listen to what we said, and to make suitable replies.

And I said, "Are we all here?"

And she said, "Not all."

And I said, "The absent are always in the wrong."

And she said, "I have heard that in French."

And I said, "Is not that impertinent?"

And she said, "No."

And a great Light fell across her face, as though a palm had smitten it, and the name of the palm was Hand, and its fruits were fingers five.

And again I addressed myself in terms of familiarity to the Everlasting, and I planted a book upon the clouds, where eight children lay prone with bees flying about their childish bonnets.

And there came a knock at my door.

"Eight o'clock!" said One. Arise!"

"Nay," I answered, "it cannot be."

"But the water is hot within the can, and the table will be spread for them that break their fast."

"So be it. I rise." And behold it was a dream!

CHAPTER III.

FAR away the mother of the little nigger stood churning. Where is the mother of the little black nigger? She is churning slowly in the garden. But cannot the aunt of the good gardener churn herself? No; for she is in the orchard, plucking the apples, peaches, apricots, pears (*Birnen*), to give to the butler's grandmother.

And there came Life and The Ideal walking hand-in-hand. And behind them came Wealth and Vastness singing together. And Infinity was there, and Health, and Wisdom, and Love. And Reflection was mounted on a steed with Joy. And many other shapes followed, delicately arrayed in fine linen. And helmet-wearing Men in Blue marshalled the procession. And they

spake roughly, saying, "Pass away there, pass away there!"

And I said, "Is this the Lord Mayor's Show?"

And One said, "No."

And I said, "Is it the Salvation Army?"

And again One said, "No."

And I said, "Is it Sequah?"

And One said again, "No."

And I said, "I have guessed enough."

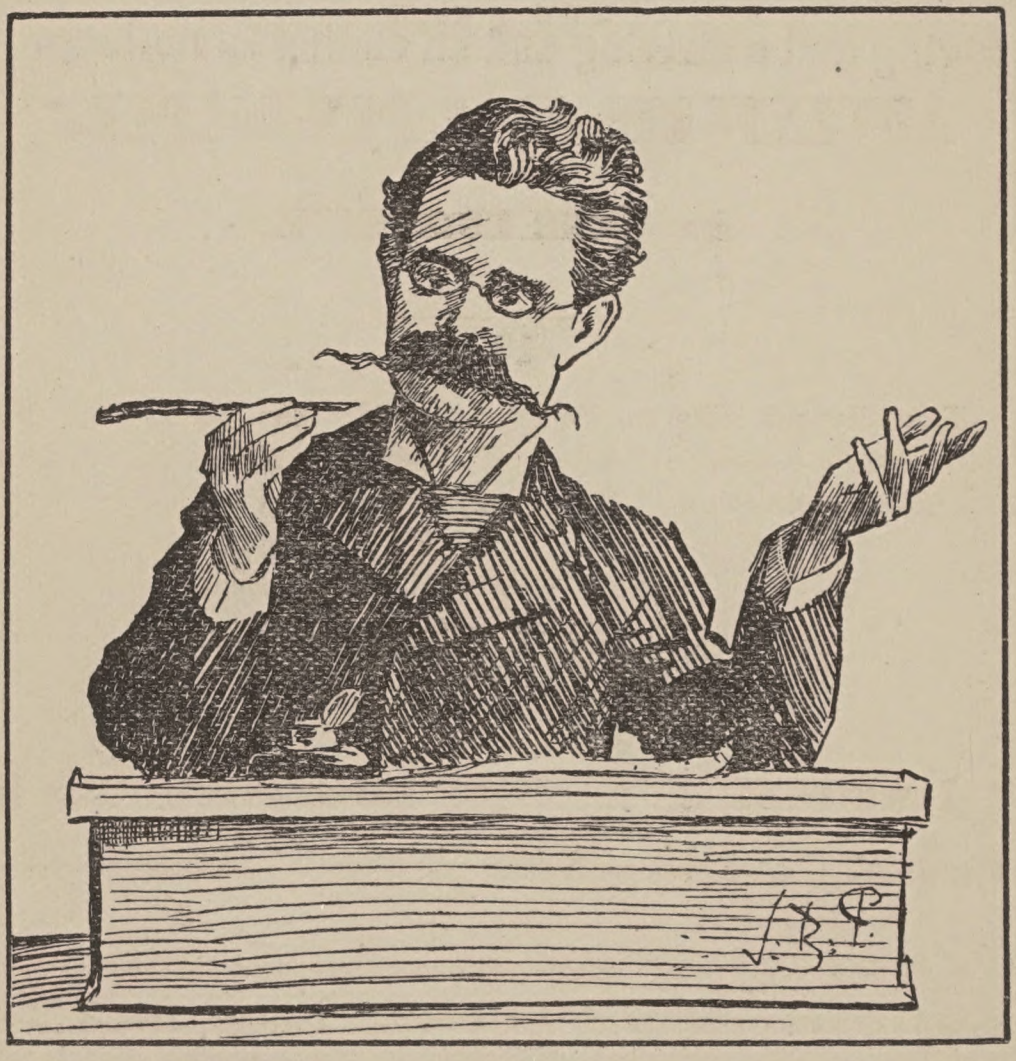
And One said, "Yes."

But the Real was not there, and they passed away.

And One said, "I am Wealth," which was absurd, but No-one laughed. And they all danced a fandango on the points of their toes. And a shaft of light lay over them. And they wandered on. At last they came to a bad, brimstone place. And I said to Some-one, "I like this. It seems a good place." And still No-one laughed. And Wealth touched me, and I was glad. And I said, "Give me millions, or buy a box of matches," and Law seized me and took me to the Cell. Then I

said to the Beak, "Your Worship." And the Beak said unto me, "Begging again. Forty shillings." And again I woke. And it was all a striving and a striving and an ending in nothing.

[THE END.]



The Author.

STRANGE
ADVENTURES OF A PEN-HOLDER.*

By WULLIE WHITE,

AUTHOR OF

"They Taught Her to Death," "A Pauper in Tulle, "My Cloudy Glare," "Green Pasterns in Picalilli," "Ran Fast to Royston," Etc., Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER I.

I HELD it in my right hand, toying with it curiously, and not without pleasure. It was merely

* "I now send you," writes this popular and delightful Author, "the latest of the Novels in which I mingle delicate sentiment with Hebridean or Highland scenery, and bring the wisdom of a Londoner to bear directly upon the unsophisticated innocence of a kilt-wearing population. I am now republishing my books in a series. I'll take short odds about my salmon-flies as compared with anyone else's, and am prepared to back my sunsets and cloud-effects against the world. No takers? I thought not. Here goes!"

a long, wooden pen-holder, inky and inert to an unappreciative eye, but to me it was a bright magician, skilled in the painting of glowing pictures, a traveller in many climes, a tried and trusted friend, who had led me safely through many strange adventures and much uncouth dialect. "Old friend," I said, addressing it kindly, "shall you and I set out together on another journey? We have seen many countries, and the faces of many men, and yet, though we are advancing in years, the time has not yet come for me to lay you down, as having no need of you. What say you—shall we start once more? I hear a confused sound as of men who murmur together, and say, 'We have supped full of horrors, and have waded chin-deep in Zulu blood; we have followed the Clergy of the Established Church into the recesses of terrible crimes, and have endured them as they bared their too sensitive consciences to our gaze. We pine for simpler, and more wholesome pleasures.' Now," I continued, "if only Queen Tita and the rest will help us, I think we can do something to satisfy

this clamour." For all answer, my pen-holder nestled lovingly in my hand. I placed my patent sunset-nib in its mouth, waved it twice, dipped it once, and began.

CHAPTER II.

THE weary day was at length sinking peacefully to rest behind the distant hills. The packed and tumbled clouds lay heavily towards the West, where a gaunt jagged tower of rock rose sheer into the sky. And lo! suddenly a broad shaft of blood-red light shot through the brooding cumulus and rested gorgeously upon the landscape. On each side of this a thin silvery veil of mist crept slowly up and hung in impalpable folds. The Atlantic sand stretching away to the North shone with the effulgence of burnished copper. And now brilliant flickers of colored light, saffron, purple, green and rose danced over the heaven's startled face. The piled clouds opened and showed in the interspace a lurid lake of blood tinged with the pale violet of an Irishwoman's eyes. Great pillars of flame sprang up rebelliously and spread over the burning horizon.

Then a strange, soft, yellow and vaporous light raised its twelve bore breech-loading ejector to its shoulder and shot across the Cryanlaughin hills, and the cattle shone red in the green pastures, and everything else glowed, and the whole world burned with the bewildering glare of a stout publican's nose in a London fog. And silence came down upon the everlasting hills whose outlines gleamed in a prismatic——

"That will do," said a mysterious Voice, "the paint-box is exhausted!"

CHAPTER III.

I WAS shocked at this rude interruption.

"Sir!" I said, "I cannot see you, though I hear your voice. Will you not disclose yourself?"

"Nonsense, man," said the aggravating, but invisible one, "do not waste time. Let us get on with the story. You know what comes next. *Revenons à nos saumons.* Ha, ha! spare the rod and spoil the book!"

I was vexed, but I had to obey, and this was the result:

The pools were full of gleaming curves of silver, each one belonging to a separate salmon of gigantic size fresh run from the sea. The foaming Black Water tumbled headlong over its rocks and down its narrow channel. Donald, the big keeper, stood industriously upon the bank arranging flies. "I hef been told," he observed, "tat ta English will

be coming to Styornoway, and there will be no more Gaelic spoken. But perhaps it iss not true, for they will tell many lies. I am a teffle of a liar myself."

And lo! as we watched, the gray sky seemed to be split in two by an invisible wedge, and a purple gleam of light shot——

"Stow that!" said the Voice, "I have allowed you to put in a patch of Gaelic, but I really cannot let you do any more sun-pictures. Try and think that it is a close time for landscapes, and don't let the light shoot again for a bit."

"All right," I retorted, not without annoyance, "but you'll just have to make up your mind to lose that salmon. It was a magnificent forty-pounder, and, if it hadn't been for your ridiculous interruption, we should have landed him splendidly in another six pages."

"As you like," said the Voice.

CHAPTER IV.

AND now our journey was drawing to a close. Out of the solemn hush of the purple mountains we had passed slowly southwards back to the roar and the turmoil of the London streets. And many friends had said farewell to us. Sheila with her low, sweet brow, her exquisitely curved lips, and her soft blue eyes had held us enraptured, and we had wept with Coquette, and fiercely cheered the Whaup while he held Wattie by the heels, and made him say a sweer. And we had talked with Macleod and grown mournful with Madcap Violet, and had seen many another fresh and charming face, and had talked Gaelic with gusto and discrimination. And Queen Tita had sped with us, and we had adored Belle, and yet we cried for more. But now the dream-journey was past, and lo! suddenly the whole heaven was blazing with light, and a bright saffron band lay across——

"Steady there!" said the voice. "Remember your promise!" [THE END.]

BO AND THE BLACKSHEEP.*

(A STORY OF *THE* SEX.)

By THOMAS OF WESSEX,

AUTHOR OF

"Guess how a Murder feels," "The Cornet Minor," "The Horse that Cast a Shoe," "One in a Turret," "The Foot of Ethel hurt her," The Flight of the Bivalve," "Hard on the Gadding Crowd," "A Lay o' Deceivers," Etc.

CHAPTER I.

In our beautiful Blackmoor or Blakemore Vale, not far from the point where the Melchester Road turns sharply towards Icenhurst on its way to Win-

* "I am going to give you," writes the Author of this book, "one of my powerful and fascinating stories of life in modern Wessex. It is well known, of course, that although I often write agricultural novels, I invariably call a spade a spade, and not an agricultural implement. Thus I am led to speak in plain language of women, their misdoings, and their undoings. Unstrained dialect is a speciality. If you want to know the extent of Wessex, consult histories of the Heptarchy with maps."

toncester, having on one side the hamlet of Batton, on the other the larger town of Casterbridge, stands the farmhouse wherewith in this narrative we have to deal. There for generations had dwelt the rustic family of the Peeps, handing down from father to son a well-stocked cow-shed and a tradition of rural virtues which yet excluded not an overgreat affection on the male side for the home-brewed ale and the home-made language in which, as is known, the Wessex peasantry delights. On this winter morning the smoke rose thinly into the still atmosphere, and faded there as though ashamed of bringing a touch of Thermidorean warmth into a degree of temperature not far removed from the zero-mark of the local Fahrenheit. Within, a fire of good Wessex logs crackled cheerily upon the hearth. Old Abraham Peep sat on one side of the fireplace, his figure yet telling a tale of former vigor. On the other sat Polly, his wife, an aimless, neutral, slatternly peasant woman, such as in these parts a man may find with the profusion of Wessex blackberries. An empty chair between

them spoke with all an empty chair's eloquence of an absent inmate. A butter-churn stood in a corner next to an ancient clock that had ticked away the mortality of many a past and gone Peep.

"Little Bo Peep."

CHAPTER II.

"WHERE be Bonduca?" said Abraham, shifting his body upon his chair so as to bring his wife's faded tints better into view. "Like enough she's met in with that slack-twisted 'hor's bird of a feller, Tom Tatters. And she'll let the sheep draggle round the hills. My soul, but I'd like to baste 'en for a poor slammick of a chap."

Mrs. Peep smiled feebly. She had had her troubles. Like other realities, they took on themselves a metaphysical mantle of infallibility, sinking to minor cerebral phenomena for quiet contemplation. She had no notion how they did this. And, it must be added, that they might, had they felt so disposed, have stood as pressing concretions which chafe body and soul—a most disagreeable state of things, peculiar to the miserably passive existence of a Wessex peasant woman.

"Bonduca went early," she said, adding, with a weak irrelevance, "She mid 'a' had her pick to-day. A mampus o' men have ben after her—fourteen of 'em, all of the best lads round about, some of 'em wi' bags and bags of gold to their names, and all wanting Bonduca to be their lawful wedded wife."

Abraham shifted again. A cunning smile played about the hard lines of his face. "Polly," he said, bringing his closed fist down upon his knee with a sudden violence, "you pick the richest, and let him carry Bonduca to the pa'son. Good looks wear badly, and good characters be of no account; but the gold is the thing for us. Why," he continued meditatively, "the old house could be new thatched, and you and me live like Lords and Ladies, away from the mulch o' the barton, all in silks and satins, wi' golden crowns to our heads, and silver buckles to our feet."

Polly nodded eagerly. She was a Wessex woman born, and thoroughly understood the pure and unsophisticated nature of the Wessex peasant.

CHAPTER III.

MEANWHILE Bonduca Peep—little Bo Peep was the name by which the country-folk all knew her—sat dreaming upon the hill-side, looking out with a premature woman's eyes upon the rich valley that stretched away to the horizon. The rest of the landscape was made up of agricultural scenes and incidents which the slightest knowledge of Wessex novels can fill in amply. There were rows of swedes, legions of dairymen, maidens to milk the lowing cows that grazed soberly upon the rich pasture, farmers speaking rough words of an uncouth dialect, and gentlefolk careless of a milk-maid's honor. But nowhere, as far as the eye could reach, was there a sign of the sheep that Bo had that morning set forth to tend for her parents. Bo had a flexuous and finely-drawn figure not unreminiscent of many a vanished knight and dame, her remote progenitors, whose

dust now mouldered in many churchyards. There was about her an amplitude of curve which, joined to a certain luxuriance of moulding, betrayed her sex even to a careless observer. And when she spoke, it was often with a fetishistic utterance in a monotheistic falsetto which almost had the effect of startling her relations into temporary propriety.

CHAPTER IV.

THUS she sat for some time in the suspended attitude of an amiable tiger-cat at pause on the edge of a spring. A rustle behind her caused her to turn her head, and she saw a strange procession advancing over the parched fields where—— [Two pages of field-scenery omitted.—ED.] One by one they toiled along, a far-stretching line of women sharply defined against the sky. All were young, and most of them haughty and full of feminine waywardness. Here and there a coronet sparkled on some noble brow where predestined suffering had set its stamp. But what most distinguished these remarkable processionists in the clear noon of this winter day was that each one carried in her arms an infant. And each one, as she reached the place where the enthralled Bonduca sat obliviscent of her sheep, stopped for a

moment and laid the baby down. First came the Duchess of Hamptonshire, followed at an interval by Lady Mottisfont and the Marchioness of Stonehenge. To them succeeded Barbara of the house of Grebe, Lady Icenway and Squire Petrick's lady. Next followed the Countess of Wessex, the Honorable Laura and the Lady Penelope, Anna, Lady Baxby, brought up the rear.

Bonduca shuddered at the terrible rencounter. Was her young life to be surrounded with infants? She was not a baby-farm after all, and the audition of these squalling nurslings vexed her. What could the matter mean? No answer was given to these questionings. A man's figure, vast and terrible, appeared on the hill's brow, with a cruel look of triumph on his wicked face. It was Thomas Tatters. Bonduca cowered; the noble dames fled shrieking down the valley.

"Bo," said he, "my own sweet Bo, behold the blood-red ray in the spectrum of your young life."

"Say those words quickly," she retorted.

"Certainly," said Tatters. "Blood-red ray, Broo-red ray, Broo-re-ray, Brooray! Tush!" he broke off, vexed with Bonduca and his own imperfect tongue-power, "you are fooling me. Beware!"

"I know you, I know you!" was all she could gasp, as she bowed herself submissive before him. "I detest you, and shall therefore marry you. Trample upon me!" And he trampled upon her.

CHAPTER V.

Thus Bo Peep lost her sheep, leaving these fleecy tail-bearers to come home solitary to the accustomed fold. She did but humble herself before the manifestation of a Wessex necessity.

And Fate, sitting aloft in the careless expanse of ether, rolled her destined chariots thundering along the pre-ordained highways of heaven, crushing a soul here and a life there with the tragic completeness of a steam-roller, granite-smashing, coal-fed, irresistible. And butter was churned with a twang in it, and rustics danced, and sheep that had fed in clover were "blasted," like poor Bonduca's budding prospects. And, from the calm nonchalance of a Wessex hamlet, another novel was launched into a world of reviews, where the multitude of readers is not as to their external displacements, but as to their subjective experiences.

[THE END.]

Lord Stonybroke receives his Reward.

STONYBROKE.*

CHAPTER I.

It was the eve of the University Boat-Race. In the remote East the gorgeous August sun was sinking to his rest behind the purple clouds, gilding with his expiring rays the elevated battlements of Aginanwater Court, the ancestral seat of His Grace the Duke of Avadrynke, K.C.B., G.I.N., whose Norman features might have been observed convulsively pressed against the plate-glass window of his alabaster dining-hall. There was in the atmosphere a strange electric hush, scarcely broken by the myriad voices of hoarse betting-men, raucously roaring out the market odds of "Fifty to one, Ox-

* *One guess only allowed at the authorship of this Boat-Race Novel.*

bridge!" or "Two ponies to a thick' un, Camford!" Well would it have been for the Duke of Avadrynke had he never offered the hospitality of his famous river-side residence to the Oxbridge Crew. But the Duke had the courage of his ancient boating-race whose banner waved proudly upon the topmost turret, bearing upon its crimson folds the proud family motto, "*Dum Vivo Bibo.*"

And the sun went down, and within Aginanwater Court the sounds of wild revelry shook the massive beams.

CHAPTER II.

THE Oxbridge Crew still sat in the marble supper-room, amid the *débris* of the feast that the Duke's Seneschal had laid out for them. The floor was paved with Magnums and Maximums of the best Heidanseekerer champagne, most of them as empty as the foolish head of the Duchess of Avadrynke, which was at that moment reposing upon the brawny chest of Lord Podophlin, the celebrated No. 5 of the Oxbridge Crew. On a raised dais at the end of the room the ladies of the Tarara *corps de ballet* were performing the final steps of the Sinuous Shadow-dance, specially dedicated to the Oxbridge Crew by the *chef d'orchestre* of Tarara's Halls.

"*Très bien, mes enfants,*" said the courtly old Bishop of Logwood, who had deserted his diocese to do battle once more in a racing boat for his

beloved University, "*très bien; je m'y-connais.*" And with that he raised himself from the jewelled sofa on which he was reclining, and blew a fatherly kiss to the *première danseuse assoluta.*

"May I be jiggered," observed the Oxbridge President, Sir Welforard Longstroke, as he selected his fourth regalia from the Duke's pearl-encrusted box, and lit it with all the *abandon* of a Society darling, "May I be jiggered if this is not ripping! What say you?" he continued, addressing young Pulyer Wright, the Coxswain, and tossing him playfully four times to the raftered ceiling—"shall we not beat the dastard foe from Camford to-morrow?" A roar of applause sprang from the smoking mouths of his seven companions.

But at this moment the Duchess of Avadrynke and Lord Podophlin rose unobserved and quitted the room. In another minute the sound of hurrying wheels, gradually growing fainter in the distance, was heard by no one in the avenue. And the dance went on, and revelry rose to its maddest pitch. But no one, who, as has been recorded

above, had heard the sound of the wheels, gave a thought to the Duke of Avadrynke, as he sat tearing his hair in the violet bedroom, having learnt from the faithful Seneschal the terrible news of the Duchess's elopement with the heir to the house of Podophlin.

CHAPTER III.

THE morn of the race dawned clear and sparkling. Far as the eye could reach, the banks of the river were rich with Millions, and firm enough to bear any run upon them however heavy. But Sir Welforard Longstroke was ill at ease. His No. 5 had fled, leaving no trace, and he had no one to fill the vacancy. He looked the very model of an aquatic hero. His broad chest was loosely clad in a pair of blue satin shorts, and his fair hair fell in waving masses over his muscular back. His thoughts were bitter. The Camford crew had started on the race some ten minutes ago, and the Oxbridge craft still waited idly in the docks for want of a No. 5.

"Surely," Sir Welforard thought to himself, "Podophlin might have postponed the elopement for one day." A confused noise interrupted his

meditations. Some ten yards from him a man roughly clad, but with the immense muscular development of the Farnese Apollo, was engaged in

The Morn of the Race.

fighting three barges at once. As Sir Welforard stepped forward, this individual struck a terrible blow. His ponderous fist, urged by the force of a

thirty-inch biceps, crashed through the chest of his first foe, severed the head of the second from his body, and struck the third, a tall man, full in the midriff, propelling him through the air into the middle of the river.

"That's enough for one day," he said, as with an air of haughty melancholy he removed his clay-pipe from his mouth. His face seemed familiar to Sir Welforard. Who could he be? All doubt was removed when he advanced, grasped Sir Welforard by the hand, and, in tones broken with emotion, said, "Don't you recognize me? I am your old College chum, Viscount Stonybroke."

CHAPTER IV.

"SAVED! Saved!" shouted Sir Welforard, joyously—"there is yet time!" Then, rushing into rhyme, he asked, "Will you row in the race, in Podophlin's place?"

"Will I row in the race?" repeated Lord Stonybroke—"just won't I!" And, without removing his hobnails, or his corduroys, he sprang lightly into the Oxbridge racing-boat. The rest is soon told. In less time than it takes to narrate the story, the Camford lead was wiped out. The exertion proved too much for seven men in the Oxbridge Crew, but the gigantic strength of the eighth, Lord Stonybroke, was sufficient of itself to win the race by fifty lengths.

And that night, when the Prime Minister handed to him the reward of victory in the shape of a massive gold dessert service, he was also able to

announce that the Stonybroke estates and the Stonybroke title had been, by the Monarch's command restored to their original possessor, as a reward of conspicuous valor and strength.

The Explosion.

WHO'D BE A SAILOR.*

(A STORY OF BLOOD AND BATTLE.)

CHAPTER I.

LISTEN, my Grandchildren! for you are mine, not indeed by the ridiculous accident of birth (since to speak the truth I am an unmarried old

* *Mr. Punch* has observed with much gratification the success of various *brochures* professing to give, under the disguise of retrospect, a prophetic but accurate account of the naval battle of the immediate future. *Mr. Punch* has read them carefully over and over again. For some time he has been living, so to speak, in the midst of magnificent iron-clad fleets. In vain have torpedoes been launched on their occasionally death-dealing mission against him, in vain have immense shells exploded in his immediate neighborhood. Nothing, not even the ramming of one whole squadron by another, has succeeded in daunting him. He has remained immovable in the mist of an appalling explosion which reduced a ship's company to a heap of toe-nails. And now, his mind

sea-dog), but by the far higher and more honorable title of having been selected by me to hear this yarn. You know well enough that such a tale *must* be told to grandchildren, and since you undoubtedly possess grandparents, and have been hired at a shilling an hour to listen to me, I have every right to address you as I did. Therefore I say, my grandchildren, attend to what I am about to relate. You who live under the beneficent sway of the mighty Australio-Canado-Africo-Celto-Americo-Anglian Federation of Commonwealths, can have no notion of the degraded conditions under which I, your grandfather, and the rest of my miserable fellow-countrymen lived fifty years ago in the year 1892. Naturally you have read no books of history referring to any date anterior to

fired by the crash of conflict and the intoxication of almost universal slaughter, he proposes to show the world how a naval novel that means to be accurate as well as vivid, to be bought by the public in thousands as well as to teach useful lessons to politicians and sailors, ought really to be written. *Mr. Punch* may as well state that he has *not* submitted this story to any naval experts. His facts speak for themselves, and require no merely professional approval to enhance their value.

1902. The wretched records of ignorance, slavery and decrepitude have been justly expunged from your curriculum. Let me tell you then that a little country calling itself the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at that time arrogated to itself the leadership of the mighty countries which you now call your home. You smile and refer me to a large-sized map on which, as you justly observe, this country occupies a space of not more than two square inches. Your surprise is intelligible, but the melancholy fact remains. All this has now been happily changed, and changed too in consequence of a war in which England (for so the country was often inaccurately called, except upon Scotch political platforms, where people naturally objected to the name), in which, as I say, England bore the chief part and obtained the decisive victory. The story of this war I am now about to relate to you.

CHAPTER II.

War had been declared. We had known for a long time that it was coming. For months past the bellicose bench of Bishops had been preaching war in all the Cathedrals of the land. Field Marshal the Duke of Wolseley, who was then a simple lord, had written articles in all the prominent American reviews, and had proved to demonstration that with 50,000 boys and the new patent revolving ammunition belt, Britain (for that too was the name of my late country) was ready to defy and conquer the world. Rear-Admiral and Lieutenent-General Sir William T. Stead, G.C.B., C.S.I., K.G., V.C.—the great journalist in the shade of whose colossal mounted statue we are now sitting—had suddenly become a convert to the doctrine that war is the great purifier, and had offered in a spirit of extraordinary self-abnegation to command both the Army and the Fleet in action. Volunteer corps armed with

scythes, paper-knives, walking-sticks, and umbrellas had sprung up all over the country, and had provided their own uniforms and equipment. Lord Randolph Churchill, father of the present Earl of South Africa, had been recalled to office by an alarmed country, and had united in his own person the offices of Secretary of State for War, First Lord of the Admiralty, Premier, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Privy Seal. As a first step towards restoring confidence, he had, with his own hands, beheaded the former Prime Minister, the Marquis of Salisbury, and had published a cheap and popular edition of his epoch-making Letters from Mashonaland. His lordship's official residence had been established at the Amphitryon Club, where they still preserve on constant relays of ice the *Bécassine bardée aux truffes* which Lord Randolph was about to eat when he snubbed the united ambassadors of Germany, France, Austria, Russia, Italy, and the Republic of Andorra. The immediate consequence was a declaration of war against us.

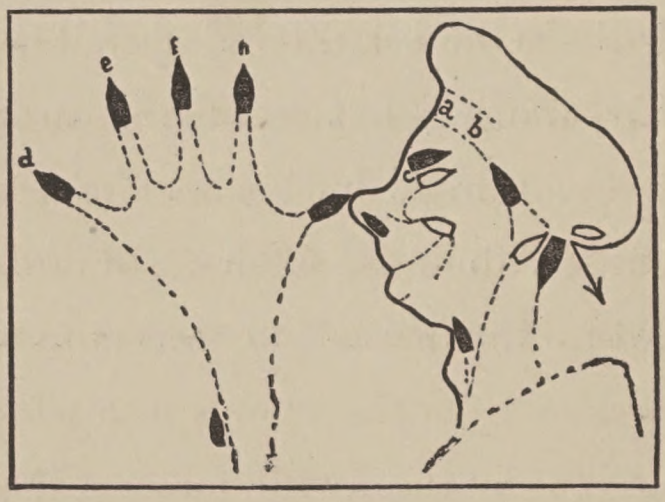
CHAPTER III.

I WAS at that time in command of H.M.S *Bandersnatch*, a vessel of nine hundred thousand horse-power, and a mean average displacement of four hundred thousand tons. Ah, the dear old *Bandersnatch!* Never can I forget the thrill of exquisite emotion which pervaded my inmost being as I stepped on board in mid-ocean. Everything was in apple-pie order. Bulkheads, girders, and beams shone like glass in the noonday sun. The agile torpedo-catchers had been practising their sports, and I could not resist a feeling of intense pride when I learnt that only fifty of these heroic fellows had that morning perished owing to the accidental explosion of one of their charming playthings at the very crisis of the game. The racers of the after-guns had been out for their morning's exercise. Indeed the saddles had only

just been removed, and the noble animals were now enjoying a good square meal of corn in their bomb-proof stable. Keep your animals in good fettle, and they'll never shirk their work: that was always my motto, and right well has it answered. The roaring furnaces, the cylindrical boilers, the prisoned steam, the twin screws, the steel shot that crashes like thunder, the fearful impact of the ram, the blanching terror of the supreme moment, the shattered limbs and scattered heads,—all these were ready, waiting but for the pressure of my finger on the middle button of the boatswain's mess-waistcoat, to speed forth upon their deadly work between the illustrated covers of a shilling pamphlet.

CHAPTER IV.

In another moment the enemy's fleet had hove in sight. Our movements in the ten minutes preceding the fatal conflict will be best understood by consulting the annexed diagram :—



We advanced in this imposing order for five minutes. Then came a puff of smoke, and in less time than it takes to tell it, two thousand men had been literally blown into thin air, their sole remnant being the left shoe of my trusty second in command, Captain Glimdowse. I trained the two

turret-guns until I had got them into perfect condition, and gave the word. The crash that followed was terrific. One of the massive missiles went home, and stayed there, no amount of inducement availing to bring it out again to face the battle. The other, however, behaved as a British missile should, and exploded in the heart of the hostile fleet. The result was overwhelming. French, German, and Russian Admirals by the thousand were destroyed, their scattered fragments literally darkening the face of the sun, and a mixed shower of iron, steel stanchions, bollards, monster guns, Admirals, sailors, stewards, cock-hats, and Post Captains fell for ten minutes without intermission from the clouds into which they had been driven by the awful force of the explosion. I turned to my Lieutenant, who was standing beside me, to give a necessary order. As I was about to address him, the machine-guns in the enemy's tops belched forth a myriad projectiles, and the unfortunate Lieutenant was swept into eternity. All that was left of him was his right

hand, which, curiously enough, remained for a minute suspended in the air in its proper relative position to what had been the Lieutenant's body. I mastered my emotion with an effort, as I reverently grasped and shook the melancholy relic. Then, shedding a silent tear, I dropped it over the side, and with an aching heart watched it disappear beneath the wave on which many of its former owner's happiest hours had been spent.

CHAPTER V.

THIS catastrophe ended the battle. The allied fleets had been swept off the face of the ocean. I packed what remained of H.M.S. *Bandersnatch* in my tobacco-pouch, attached myself to a hen-coop, and thus floated triumphantly into Portsmouth Harbour.

[THE END.]

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